ISLAM OUR CHOICE

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ISLAM OUR CHOICE

(Unabridged)

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THE SHAH JEHAN MOSQUE,
Woking, Surrey, England
(built in 1889 C.E.)

FOREWORD

There has long been a demand for a book that would relate in simple language the stories of various Europeans accepting Islam. Since 1913 C.E. such articles have been published in *The Islamic Review*. Some of these now form part of *ISLAM OUR CHOICE*.

Islam Our Choice is at once interesting and instructive. The scholar and the lay reader may equally benefit by it. This is a book that should be widely circulated in all parts of the world and translated into as many languages as possible. It brings a better understanding of Islam to Muslims and opens a new vista of Islam before non-Muslims.

Fifty years ago the Khwajah Kamal-ud-Din, the pioneer of Islam in the West in this century, came to England. *Islam Our Choice* is, in fact, a humble acknowledgment of the work started by the late Khwajah. It is an unfinished work, and will remain so, because Islam is going to be the choice of an ever-increasing number of people throughout the world.

The idea of such a book was conceived by our friend Ebrahim Ahmed Bawany of Karachi, Pakistan, and in the course of the preparation of this book the theme was enlarged and it was considered appropriate to include a life-sketch of the Prophet Muhammad, a brief history of Muslim civilization and a host of other subjects related to the teachings of the Qur'án. The views of many non-Muslim writers have also been given with complete references of their

works. Parts of this book have been printed separately by the Begum 'A'ishah Ahmed Bawany Trust, Karachi, Pakistan, for distribution. It is being printed now in its complete form for the first time. Our special thanks are due to the *Maulána* 'Abdul Majid, Editor of *The Islamic Review,* who has collaborated with Dr. S. A. Khulusi in the compilation of the book, and Mr. Iqbal Ahmad, for typing the greater part of the manuscript and reading the proofs.

S. MUHAMMAD TUFAIL,
The Imam,
The Shah Jehan Mosque,
and Joint Editor,
The Islamic Review,
Woking, Surrey, England.

11th May, 1961.

INTRODUCTION

Through its influence on millions of people in various lands, this unique mode of life known as Islam has achieved wonders. It has created a civilization resplendent with beauty and grandeur — Cordova, Granada, Seville, Istanbul, Lahore, Delhi and Cairo are but a few of its monuments.

What has made so many millions of people from all walks of life attracted to it? The answer is simple. People are attracted to Islam for a variety of reasons. First and foremost because of its simplicity, which appeals to all minds. One does not have to be a great philosopher or an accomplished metaphysician to understand and believe in Islam. It satisfies both simple-minded and deep-thinking people. Those fascinated by the abstract and metaphysical view of the universe find their complete satisfaction in the amazing aspect of Islam known as Sufism. What could be simpler and deeper at once than the belief epitomized in the words of the formula of faith of the Muslim: "There is but one God; Muhammad is His Messenger"? The first part of the formula endows man with dignity in his own right, while the other emphasises the eternal relationship between man and His Creator.

Islam comprises the good and fascinating elements of all the great religions and doctrines of the world. It is at once a religion, a social order and a political ideology: three things in one. I do not think that there is any other religion that has the undeniable merit of answering all the require-

ments of mankind. To give one example, Christianity, as it stands today, is so overladen with dogma that its essential tenets are obscured. Islam recognizes that all the great religions of the world have the basic truths, but in many of them they are so enwrapped in irrelevant and cumbersome dogmatism that they are difficult to understand. In Christianity, for instance, they are so much intermingled with the heathen philosophy of the Greeks that one wishes an ancient Greek to come to life to explain them. Perhaps even he could not account for such a mathematical anomaly as 3=1, upon which the edifice of modern Christianity is based.

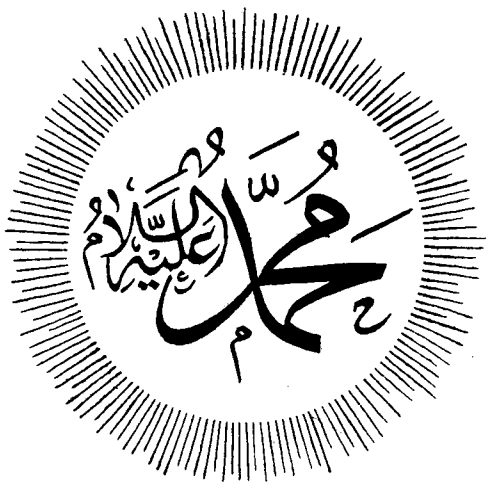
Judaism, on the other hand, is a religion rather than a philosophy, and fails to give satisfaction to the human soul as regards life in the next world. And, though it professes the doctrine of "One God", yet He is not, according to the Jews, Universal,[1] but belongs to the Jews alone! Moreover, the Old Testament abounds in so many unprintable paragraphs that it is unsuitable, and even dangerous, to teach to children.

Buddhism, in its turn, is a pure philosophy. Though not so confusing as Christianity, it lacks the element of self-defence and breeds in man the disastrous germ of indifference —indifference to one's family, relatives and friends.

In the following pages an effort is made to present those features of Islam which attract mankind to it.

1 This, I am told, applies to Hinduism as well.

PART I



MUHAMMAD

(" May peace be upon him ! ")

CHAPTER I

A BRIEF LIFE SKETCH OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD

Muhammad, the son of 'Abdullah and Aminah, was born on the 12th Rabi al-Awwal — 29th August, 570 C.E. — in a family of the Quraysh in Mecca. His father had passed away a few months before his birth, and he lost his mother when he was in his sixth year. The charge of the orphan was undertaken by his grandfather, 'Abd al-Muttalib, who, after four years of fostering, confided the boy to the care of his uncle, a poor but honourable man, Abu Talib. At the age of twelve, he accompanied his uncle on a trading expedition to Syria. From his early childhood till the age of forty, he showed all the noble traits of human character that commanded respect from friend and foe alike ; and, indeed, the Arabs conferred upon him the sobriquet of *al-Amin,* or the trustworthy one. At the age of twenty-five he married a venerable lady, Khadija, in whose service he was a caravan conductor. The lady was fifteen years his senior, and several children were born to them. One notable achievement before his call to prophethood deserves mention, for it affords us a glance into the heart of the Prophet. He formed a band of honest men, whose aim it was to track down offenders and to bring them to justice, and to adopt means to protect the widows and orphans, who were mostly the victims of oppression.

When the Call came to him, the Prophet, being weighed down with the sense of onerous responsibility, hied him to

his wife to seek relief and consolation. The words she used to comfort him are worth recording: "God will never forsake you; for you show due regard for blood ties; you carry the burden of the decrepit; you practise virtues that are extinct; entertain guests; and stand by what is righteous in the face of odds." The first to accept his assurance of Divine commission were Khadija, his wife, and his friends Zayd, 'Ali, Abu Bakr and Arqam.

The hurling of open denunciation at the ancestral idols of the Quraysh by Muhammad had set all Arabia by the ears. Their resentment led them to approach Muhammad's uncle, Abu Talib, to persuade him to silence his *protégé*. The uncle, under the collective pressure brought to bear upon him, agreed to persuade his nephew to desist from his reckless efforts. Muhammad said, "Uncle dear, even if they were to place the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand to turn me from the work I have in hand, verily will I not pause till the Lord carry my cause to victory or till I perish therein". Upon these words he burst into tears. The uncle said, "Go in peace, son of my brother, and say what thou wilt; for, by God, I will on no condition abandon thee." This least expected decision of Abu Talib to stand by Muhammad came as a surprise to the Quraysh. They resolved upon trying to entangle the feet of Muhammad in allurements. They said to him, "Listen: if your ambition is to possess wealth, we will amass wealth for you, as much as ever you wish; and if you aspire to power and honour, we are prepared to swear you allegiance as our overlord and king; and if you have any fancy for beauty, you shall have the hand of the fairest maiden in the land." Muhammad's reply was, "Neither do I want wealth, nor do I want power. I have been commissioned by God as a warner unto mankind. I deliver His message to you. Should you accept it, you shall have felicity in this life and in the life hereafter; and should you reject it, surely God will decide between you and me."

In the meantime Islam had been making slow but constant progress. The Quraysh had realized that Muhammad was not to be turned from his aim, so they decided to try the effect of putting the Banu Hashim — the family of Muhammad — under the ban of ostracism, because it had refused to disown him. But, as before, this device died a natural death, and the ban was revoked.

Muhammad's efforts, attended with physical persecutions and mental tortures, extending over a period of thirteen long winters, were utterly lost upon his own kinsmen. He now turned, in despair, to the people of Ta'if to convince them of the truth of his mission. But here, as well, a none too promising outlook — rebuffs and scorn — awaited him. They even went so far as to pelt him with stones, so that his heels bled.

The persecution waxing ever hotter and more intense, he had already advised about a hundred men and women of his adherents to seek refuge from the inhuman cruelties of the Meccans by emigrating to the Christian country of Abyssinia. Shortly afterwards, when he stood sorely in need of the protection of his uncle Abu Talib and the comfort of his wife Khadija, the cruel indiscriminating hand of death snatched them both away from him like a bolt from the blue thus affording the Quraysh a freer hand in dealing with the situation. And they lost no time in deciding upon extirpating his disciples and making short work of Muhammad, on a certain night when the Prophet, under the guidance of Divine revelation, fled for his life to Medina, 247 miles distant from Mecca, accompanied by his friend Abu Bakr — the precise date being June 20th, 622 C.E. This epoch-making event in the history of the world marks the beginning of the Muslim era called Hijrah, or Hegira. They were hotly pursued ; and on the way they hid themselves in a cave called Mt. Thaur, three miles from Mecca, for three days. On hearing the footsteps of the enemy, who had reached the mouth of the cave, Abu Bakr said, " We are but two, and the enemy are many ". " Do not be downcast,"

said Muhammad, " we are two, and God in our midst, a third ". After eight days' journey they reached Qubaa, a village near Medina, and after three days' stay they proceeded to Medina ; but here, too, the enemy would not let them be. An army of 1,000 Meccans marched against him, and the Muslims, who were 313 strong, won a victory at Badr, situated 30 miles from Medina and 220 miles from Mecca. Having learnt nothing and forgotten nothing from this defeat, the Meccans rallied once more to the call of Abu Sufyan, their leader, to make another desperate attempt against the rising tide of Islam. Thus another battle was fought at Uhud, which lies 3 miles from Medina and 138 miles from Mecca. The Meccans were driven off. Having expended their strength, they showed from now onwards no marked signs of hostility against the resistless power of the Muslims. They entered into a truce with Muhammad in the year 6 A.H. (628 C.E.). The truce was broken by the Meccans and two years later Muhammad triumphed over a new foe — the Jews ; and in 630 C.E. he made a bloodless entry into the town of Mecca — his birth-place, from which, eight years before, he had fled a hunted fugitive — at the head of an army 10,000 strong. The Meccans, remembering full well the prodigiousness of their past dark record, were surprised at the general amnesty granted (even to such as had attempted the Prophet's life) in the words : " There is no reproof against you, O Meccans ! God will forgive you ; for He is Merciful and Loving. Go, you are free." History fails to record any other like display of magnanimity, where a person wielding the sceptre of power freely forgoes his vengeance on the vanquished foe.

The Ka'bah — the House dedicated to the worship of God — was purged of the 360 idols standing in it. In another two years Arabia had either embraced Islam or sworn loyalty to the Prophet. Just before his death, he had succeeded in effecting a mighty reformation. He had swept away all corruption, had stamped out the vices of gambling and female infanticide ; he had raised the status of women,

had abolished wine drinking, had checked the horrible customs of polyandry and polygyny, had put a stop to all constant and bloody wars, and had welded the warring tribes of Arabia into one brotherhood. The whole of that land was, so to say, transformed into a garden on Earth within a short period of but twenty-three years. And when the Prophet completed his mission, he addressed a vast congregation of over 120,000 in the plains of Mina, near Mecca, in the memorable words: "Ye people, listen to my words, for I know not whether another year will be vouchsafed to me after this year, to find myself amongst you at this place.

"Your lives and properties are sacred and inviolable amongst you, as this day and this month are sacred to all, until you appear before your Lord. And remember you shall indeed appear before your Lord, Who shall demand from each of you an account of his actions.

"O People, you have rights over your wives and your wives have rights over you. Treat your wives with kindness and love; verily, you are responsible for them to God.

"Usury is forbidden. The debtor will return the principal, and a beginning will be made with the loans of my uncle, 'Abbas, son of 'Abd al-Muttalib.

"The aristocracy of old time is trampled under my feet. The Arab has no superiority over him who is not an Arab. All are children of Adam, and Adam was made of earth.

"O People, hearken to my words and understand them. Know, then, all Muslims are brothers, one of another. You are one brotherhood. Nothing which belongs to another can be lawfully possessed by any, unless freely given out of goodwill. Guard yourselves against committing injustice.

"And your war-captive servants! See that you feed them with such food as you yourselves eat; and clothe them with the stuff that you yourselves wear; and if they commit a fault which you are not minded to forgive, then part with

them ; for they are the servants of the Lord and are not to be harshly treated.

" I am leaving to you two noble things ; so long as you cling to them, you shall not go astray: the Book of God and ways of His Prophet.

" Let him who is present, tell it to him who is absent: for it may be that he who shall be told may remember better than he who has heard it here.

" O you who are assembled here, have I delivered my message and fulfilled my word?"

The assembled congregation cried out with one voice, " Yea, verily you have."

A sudden glow flashed upon the face of the Prophet Muhammad, and with eyes filled with grateful tears, he raised his hands towards heaven and said thrice:

" O Lord, I beseech Thee, bear Thou witness to it."

A few hours before his death, when all the faithful had assembled around his deathbed, he said: " If there be any man whom I have wronged, I submit my back to his scourge. If I have aspersed the character of any man, let him put me to shame in the presence of all. If I have taken what belongs to another, let him come forward and claim his own."

These were the words of the man at whose feet the whole of Arabia lay prostrate, and who was the strongest man of his age in the world.

" None else but the Great Companion on high do I require," were his last words of his earnest prayer, in a whisper. It was on Monday, the 12th of Rabi' al-Awwal — 8th June, 632 C.E. — when he breathed his last, at the age of sixty-three. May God shower His choicest blessings on him!

* * *

His physical features were equally charming. His looks were manly and attractive. No drawing and no painting has been preserved of him, but we have a description of him in

the minutest detail which is far clearer and more lively than any painting kept of a great man.

According to various authorities cited by the *Bukhari,*[1] he was neither excessively tall nor short ; neither very fair nor dark. His hair was neither very curly nor straight. Hardly were there twenty grey hairs in both his head and beard. He had rather large hands and feet. His fingers were stout but not short, which features appealed to the Arabs greatly. Of his countenance his contemporaries are unanimously agreed that it was handsome, with large black eyes. He was well built with square shoulders. The colour that suited him best was red.

If the criterion of a man's unaffected and genuine kindness is measured by his attitude to God's dumb and helpless creatures, the animals, then Muhammad surely had the fullest share of kind-heartedness. He once said to his companions, " Verily, a woman entered hell-fire on account of a cat, because she imprisoned her, neither feeding her nor letting her go about in search of food, until she was starved to death ".

On another occasion he related the following story. " While a man was walking in a road he felt the pang of thirst. Finding a well, he went down and quenched his thirst. On coming out, he saw a dog panting with thirst and eating the damp soil. The man said to himself, ' This dog is suffering from thirst as much as I did '. So he went down the well again and filled his shoe with water and gave it to the dog to drink. Thereupon, God thanked him and forgave his sins."

On hearing this story one of his companions said to the Prophet, " O Apostle of God, do we get rewarded for being kind to animals? " Whereupon he replied, " Indeed there is reward for kindness to all living creatures."[2]

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1 The *Bukhari,* Vol. III, pp. 295-7.

2 The *Bukhari,* Vol. VII.

To appreciate Muhammad, one must go carefully through that monumental work *Sahih al-Bukhari*,[1] which can be aptly termed the " Biography of the Prophet Muhammad ". In it, one can find glowing proofs of that warm heart and humane nature. The following is just one instance from many.

" A woman came with a garment which she had made especially for the Prophet. He gracefully accepted it and wore it. Coming to an assembly he was met by a man who touched it and said, " Give it to me, O Messenger of God ". The Prophet said, " With pleasure ! ". Having stayed for some time at the meeting, he went home, took off the garment, wrapped it up and sent it to the man who had asked for it, in spite of the fact that he was in sore need of it himself.

Although Muhammad was the virtual ruler of Arabia, he did not keep a porter at his door. People called on him as they liked and when they liked.[2] He was so easy-going that a slave-girl of Medina could lead him by the hand and take him anywhere she wished.[3]

Muhammad had a deep and thorough understanding of human nature and its weaknesses. That is why he was ready to make allowances wherever possible, and forgave injuries. A man once came to him and said : " O Prophet of God, I deserve punishment (*asabtu 'l-Hadda),* so inflict it on me." Hardly had he said it when the call to prayer was announced. The man prayed with the Prophet. After the prayer he repeated his first request. So the Prophet asked : " Have you not prayed with us? " " Yes," replied the man. " Then," rejoined the Prophet, " God has forgiven you."[4]

He forbade spying for one's own benefit or for the benefit of others. So he said, *wa la tajassasu wa la tahassasu !*[5] For if God shields the name of someone from scandal, it is not

1 The *Bukhari,* al-Mumirriya Press, Cairo, Egypt, IX, 117, mid.
2 *Ibid.,*
3 *Ibid,* VIII, 37, mid.
4 *Ibid.,*
5 " Do not spy for your own personal benefit nor as agent for others."

right for anyone to defame it. On the Day of Judgment a faithful slave of God would approach his Lord and confess to Him his sins. The Lord would reply, " Yes, I have shielded you in the other world, so I forgive you in this."[1]

The clearest characteristic of his was his tolerance. He tolerated the Meccans who abused and hurt him. Yet when, in after years, he entered Mecca as a conqueror, he forgave his enemies, except those who had committed public offences.

Time and again a man would stand up and insult him to his face. 'Omar would exclaim, " O Prophet of God, let me strike off his head." The Prophet Muhammad would stop him with a smile. According to *Bukhari,* an uncouth bedouin once went with his son to Muhammad. At the door he said, " Go and tell him to come out." The son felt rather ashamed of calling the Prophet in this manner. So his father insisted : " Go and call him out ; he is no tyrant." The Prophet then came out and said, pointing to a cloak he was wearing, " It is all right ; we have kept of the booty this for you."

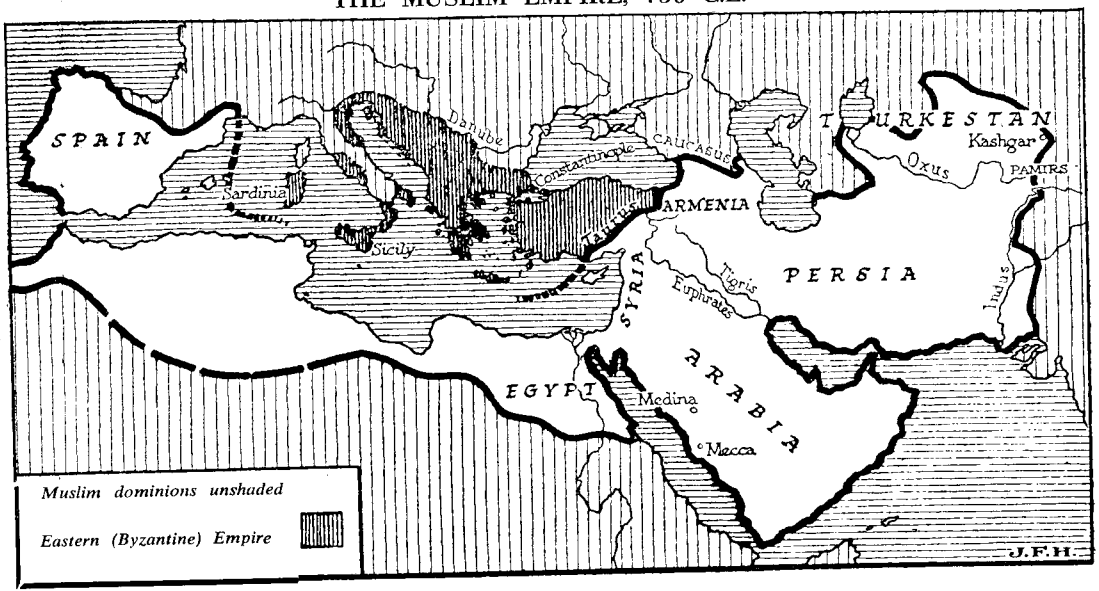
* * *

When all is said and done, one must not overlook the fact that all these features are only reflections of the great personality of the founder of the Hadith. Muhammad was, and shall always remain, a source of attraction to many non-Muslims, let alone the Muslims themselves, who have compiled so many biographies and composed so many odes to him. I shall confine myself to Arab poets because Arabic is my mother tongue. Odes in Urdu and Persian are equally superb. Three Arab names especially come to my mind in this respect, Safiy al-Din al-Hilli (d. 1350 C.E.), Busiri (d. 1296 C.E.) and Ahmad Shawqi (d. 1932 C.E.). Of all these Busiri in his Arabic ode entitled *Nasj al-Burda* is, to my mind, the best. I will just quote here the opening line :

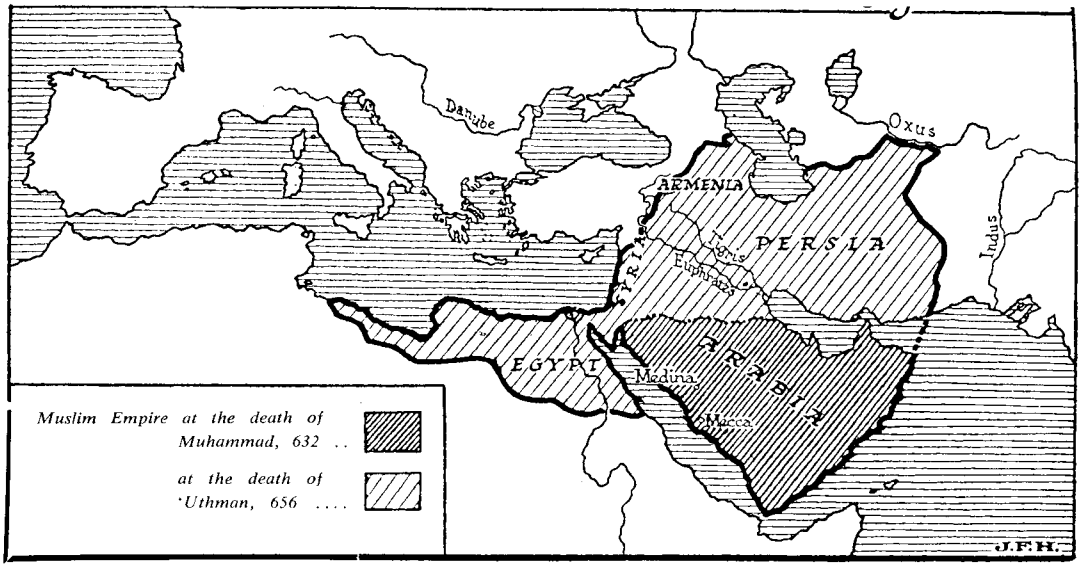
" How could the other prophets reach thy height,
O Heaven, that is unsurpassed by any other heaven in loftiness? "

1 The *Bukhari,* al-Mumirriya Press, Cairo, Egypt, IX, 117, mid.

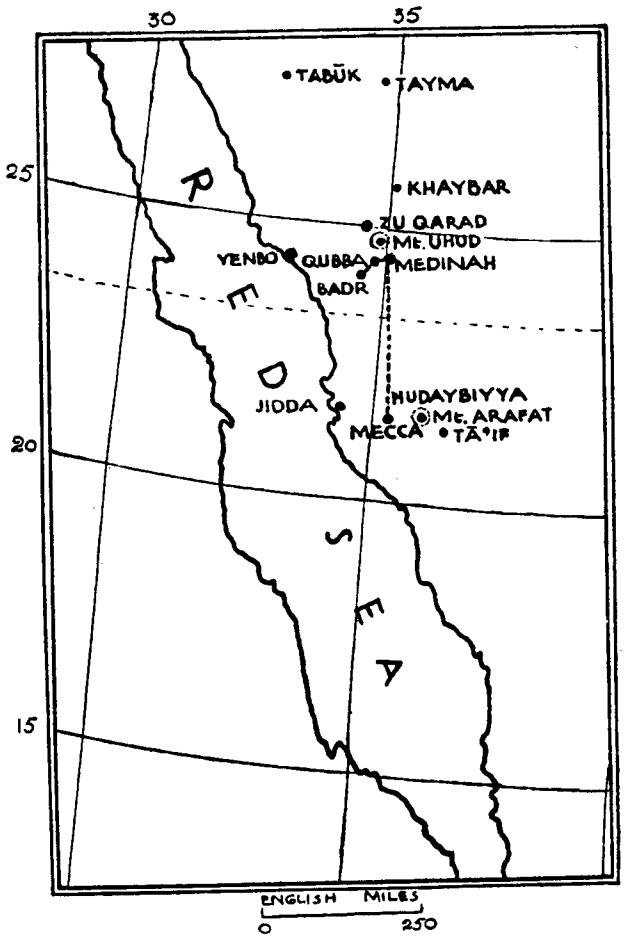
THE MUSLIM EMPIRE, 750 C.E.



THE GROWTH OF THE MUSLIM POWER IN 25 YEARS



Two maps illustrating the miracle of the meteoric spread of Islam in the three continents within one hundred years of the death of the Prophet Muhammad



MAP OF WEST CENTRAL ARABIA

Showing the positions of the two decisive battles, of Badr and Uhud, which the Prophet Muhammad had to fight. Note the relative distance at which they are situated both from Mecca and Medina. That they were fought nearer Medina than Mecca determines that it was the Meccans who were the aggressors.

HOW THE SWORD WAS THRUST ON THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD

" Permission to fight is given to those upon whom war is made because they are oppressed."—The Qur'án, 22:39.

" Much has been said of Muhammad's propagating the religion by the sword. The sword indeed ! Every new opinion at its starting is precisely in the minority of one. In one man's head alone it dwells as yet. One man alone of the whole world believes it. There is one man against all men. That he take his sword and try to propagate with that will do little for him."—T. Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero-Worship.*

Name of Battle	Where Fought	When Fought	Distance in Miles from		Relative Strength		Result
			Mecca	Medina	Meccans	Muslims	
Badr	Badr	2 A.H. (623 C.E.)	220	30	1,000	313	Meccans defeated.
Uhud	Uhud	3 A.H. (624 C.E.)	247	3	3,000	700	Issue undecided. Muslims sustain heavy losses. Meccans also leave the field.
Ahzab	Medina	5 A.H. (626 C.E.)	250	—	24,000	1,000	Medina besieged. Meccans and their confederates after a month's futile struggle get exhausted.

ONLY WHEN ATTACKED IN HIS LAST ASYLUM MUHAMMAD TURNS AT BAY

Three Repeated Attacks on Muslims

Not content with having driven the Prophet and his handful of followers out of their homes and hearths, the Meccans did not leave them alone even in their distant asylum. They made three repeated attacks on Medina. The Muslims had no alternative left but to turn at bay and give the enemy manly battle.

THIRTEEN YEARS OF NON-RESISTANCE TO PERSECUTION

When the Prophet proclaimed his message of one God, one Humanity, a relentless campaign of persecution was started against him and his followers. For instance, one man was made to prostrate on burning noon-tide sand with heavy slabs of stone on his chest. A woman was tied by her legs to two camels and the animals driven in opposite directions, tearing the victim's body into two.

EMIGRATION TO ABYSSINIA

To escape the fury of the Meccans twice did the Prophet send some of his followers to seek shelter in Abyssinia. The Meccans were soon upon their heels to claim them back. But the Christian king, the Negus, refused to hand them back.

BLOODLESS CONQUEST OF MECCA AND GENERAL AMNESTY

Within two years of the truce, the Meccans violate one of the terms and attack a tribe in alliance with the Muslims. Bound as they were by the terms of the Treaty, the Muslims had to avenge the wrong done to their allies. The Prophet marches on Mecca at the head of 10,000 strong. Mecca surrenders without bloodshed. The erstwhile bloodthirsty enemies, guilty of horrible crimes against Muslims, now stand at the sole mercy of the Prophet. He grants them general amnesty. Mark the humility of his triumphal proclamation :

"This day I trample under my feet all the false pride, all the spirit of revenge, all blood-money of the days of ignorance, O Quraysh ! God has crushed the claim to vain-gloriousness and social superiority. Listen ! All human beings are the sons of Adam and Adam made out of dust.

"O People ! God has created you out of one male and female. There is no superiority of castes and tribes. They are only meant for identification. The test of greatness is virtue."

THE MIGRATION

The campaign of persecution lasted for thirteen years. The Meccans at last conspired to kill the Prophet at night. Assassins surrounded the house. In the dark of the night the Prophet made good his escape and took refuge in Medina, 250 miles from Mecca.

THE PROPHET PURCHASES PEACE AT HEAVY COST

In the year 6 A.H. (627 C.E.) the Prophet, along with fourteen hundred followers, undertook a journey to Mecca to perform the Pilgrimage, a privilege open to friend and foe during a particular month when, under the unwritten law of time-honoured tradition, all bloodshed was brought to a standstill. The Muslims carried no arms. At Hudaybiyya, just outside Mecca, they were stopped by the Meccans. A battle was imminent. The Prophet, however, averted it by concluding a truce for ten years, at most humiliatory and disadvantageous terms. The Muslims objected to it but the Prophet was anxious to have peace at any cost. The terms were :

1. In case someone from among the Quraysh should embrace Islam and go over to the Muslim camp, he shall be handed over to the Quraysh, should the latter so demand.
2. In case, however, someone should renounce Islam and go over to the aid of the Quraysh, the latter need not hand him over to the Muslims.

"One has only to refer to Muhammad's conduct to the prisoners after the battle of Badr, to his patient tolerance towards his enemies at Medina, his love for children and dumb creatures and above all his bloodless entry into Mecca and complete amnesty he gave to those who had been his bitter enemies during eighteen years of insult and persecution and finally open war to show that cruelty was no part of Muhammad's nature."—R. Bosworth Smith, in his *Mohammed and Mohammedanism,* London 1874.

"*Verily, the religion with God is Islam*" (The Qur'án, 3 : 18)

CHAPTER II

ISLAM

An Introduction to the Faith and its History

Islam, like Judaism, is a monotheistic religion. The nearest Christian sect to it is the Unitarian sect; for the Muslims believe that Jesus Christ (God bless his name!) was a great prophet. A Muslim is never considered a true votary of Islam within its pale if he does not believe in Moses, Jesus and the other prophets whose names are mentioned, and those not mentioned by name, in the Qur'án. To believe in Muhammad alone is not enough; we have to believe in every prophet that preceded Muhammad. Hence one can frankly say that the nearest religion to Christianity among all the religions of the world is Islam. You can safely regard Islam as the latest edition of Christianity, and every true Muslim is a Christian and a Muslim at the same time. The only difference between Islam and some sects of Christianity is the belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ. I cannot regard this as a universal difference between the two great religions as there are many Christians like the Reverend Hastings Rashdall, the distinguished Dean of Carlisle, who,

speaking at the Modern Churchmen's Congress held in Cambridge on 14th August, 1921, said : "Jesus Christ never claimed divinity for himself, and was in the fullest sense a man, with not merely a human body, but with human soul, intellect and will." Had I not seen the name of the Reverend Dean attached to this quotation, I should have thought that a devout Muslim religious dignitary had said it.

Muslim belief rests on four fundamental institutions, which are as follows :

(1) Performing one's prayers every day ;
(2) Fasting one month every year from daybreak to sunset ;
(3) Alms-giving, which constitutes the giving away of one-fortieth of one's property every year ; and,
(4) Performing the pilgrimage to Mecca, which, incidentally, is obligatory only on those who can afford it.

The advantages derived from these ordinances are many: by performing prayers a Muslim learns modesty, submission to his superiors, and curbs his arrogance, apart from the fact that by performing prayers he is making some physical exercise five times a day, which is beneficial to his well-being and health. From fasting he derives the advantage of learning how to bear hardships, how to be patient and to sympathize with the misery of the poor and destitute, in addition to giving rest to his stomach, which is working all the year round without respite. It should be remembered that our fasting is not mere abstinence from eating, drinking and smoking, but also from carnal desires. It is therefore fasting from sensual as well as material things.

From *Zakat*, or obligatory alms-giving, a Muslim learns how to help the poor members of his community. It is, in fact, a light and pleasant religious tax, like the 10 per cent contribution made by the Mormons to their church. Formerly, in the early days of the Islamic Empire, there was no other form of tax imposed on the Muslims. There came, however, a time when a Muslim would go round a city looking for

someone who deserved alms, but he could find no one. That was in the heyday of Islam.

From pilgrimage the Muslims get the greatest benefit of all: they meet together from various countries near and far to discuss their mutual problems and to find the best solution for them. It helps to bring among the Muslims a better understanding and appreciation of one another. It is a kind of United Nations Organization. The fact should not be overlooked that Muhammad understood and appreciated the importance of such an institution fourteen centuries ago!

Now we come to the holy book of the Muslims, the Qur'án. It is written in a highly literary style that has always been considered the model of the best prose. Though easy and simple to grasp, it is inimitable. The smallest unit in the Qur'án is the *ayah,* or verse ; a collection of verses make a *surah,* or chapter. These chapters are either Meccan, that is to say, they were revealed in Mecca, or Medinese, revealed in Medina after the Prophet's flight there. The salient characteristics of a Meccan *surah* are the terseness, brevity and forceful nature of its verses. They are on the whole shorter, full of threats and admonitions, highly rhyming and musical. The Medinese *surahs* are, on the whole, longer, not so poetical as the Meccan ones, and full of legislation and explanation of ways and means of administration, legal points and judicial orders concerning inheritance and so on. Perhaps the most picturesque *surah* in the Qur'án is that entitled " Joseph " where an eloquent narrative style is so much in evidence.

The manner in which the Qur'án was communicated to Muhammad was by revelation. At the moment when the verses and *surahs* were revealed he used to feel in a state of trance. There were days and nights when there was no revelation. So he used to pray to God to solve his problems through revelation. This happened after the revelation of the first chapter. Time and again Muhammad reiterated that he was just an ordinary man, save that God had ordered him to carry out His command. This question of revelation is

best explained on a modern psychological basis by that outstanding Swedish scholar, Tor Andrae, in his most stimulating book, *Muhammad the Man and his Faith*".

There is no doubt, even among non-Muslims, that Muhammad was inspired! Had he not been so, we should not have found so many millions following him, nor such a great literature heaped round him and his faith. The bulk of fourteenth century Arabic literature is based on his religion, and the Muslim civilization was but its most manifest outcome.

He gave an incentive to the *Sufis*, the Mystics of Islam, to speak in such an eloquent language as that of Rabi'ah al-'Adawiyyah (d. 801 C.E. and buried at Basra, Iraq), who in one of her prayers says: "O my Lord, if I worship Thee from fear of Hell, burn me in Hell, and if I worship Thee from hope of Paradise, exclude me thence; but if I worship Thee for Thine own sake, then withhold not from me Thine eternal beauty."

Muhammad was born in 571 C.E., and was commissioned by God to convey His message to mankind at the age of forty. The first revelation came to him while he was meditating in a famous cave near Mecca known as the cave of Hira'.[1] For a long time his tribe, the Quraysh, persecuted him and fought against him. One day he was so exhausted that he raised his eyes towards heaven and said most humbly: "O my God, to Thee I complain of the feebleness of my strength and of my lack of resourcefulness and of my insignificance! Thou art the Most Merciful of the merciful, Thou art the Lord of the weak."

He used to say to the unfriendly Meccans, "*Faqad labithtu fikum 'umuran min qablihi afala ta'qilun?*" — "I have lived amongst you for a long time, before preaching it (Islam); can you not understand now that it is a revelation beyond my control?" (The Qur'án 10 : 16).

1 Notice how Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet, used to do the same thing. There are even some verses in the Book of Mormons reminiscent of Qur'ánic verses.

The religion that Muhammad brought forth to Arabia is characterized by simplicity. It is enough for anyone to repeat the following formula to become a Muslim: "*Ashhadu an la ilaha illa 'l-Lah wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan 'abduhu wa rasuluh*" ("I testify that there is no deity but God and that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger"). That is Islam. The greatest sin that can be committed against it is to associate other gods with God. With this formula Muhammad saved Arabia from worshipping 360 idols. His strict monotheism came as a violent reaction to the lax polytheism of pre-Islamic Arabia.

One finds a great resemblance between the Qur'án and the Old and New Testaments. The reason is simple: it is because they all aim at the good of humanity and they all originated from one and the same source, — Almighty God.

Muhammad was particularly kind to woman. He raised her social status and ordered that she should not be ill-treated. He gave her the right of divorce if she wished it. Moreover, he gave her the right to propose to a man rather than wait a long time for a suitor. To make her position secure in marriage he ordered the bridegroom to give her security money at the time of marriage, to be paid to her when she desired. This was, in a way, a preventive measure to work as a check on the whims and fancies of the husband and also to lessen the incidence of divorce. Divorce is permitted in Islam and need not be resorted to only on the grounds of adultery, incompatibility, impotency or inability to maintain one's wife. Once the Prophet Muhammad pronounced the dissolution of marriage upon the demand of an Arab woman who, although joined in matrimony by the Prophet Muhammad himself to a friend of his, simply because the wife just felt aversion to her husband. But it is severely frowned upon. Hence the Prophet Muhammad's famous saying: "*Inna abghadha 'l-halali 'inda llahi al-talaq*" ("The most hateful of all lawful things in the eyes of God is divorce"). Divorce in Islam must be pronounced three times in the presence of two witnesses. Those pro-

nouncements should be made on three separate occasions. This was stipulated just in case the first and second pronouncements were made in haste or in fits of anger. Thus both parties are given the chance to cool down and reconsider their decision. If, however, the third pronouncement takes place, then it means that there is an irreparable disagreement and that there is no way out but final parting. In such an eventuality the children (according to Muslim jurisprudence) up to the age of seven belong to the mother, although the father pays for their maintenance and the maintenance of the mother until she is remarried. After the age of seven the father has the right to claim his children to bring them up the way he wishes, provided that he does not deny the mother the privilege of seeing them at reasonable intervals.

If, however, a woman chooses to be divorced at her own whim or because she has fallen in love with another man, and no fault is found with her present husband, then she will have to relinquish the security money and everything that was given her by her husband, unless he chooses to offer it to her as a gift, which course the Qur'án advocated by saying: "*Wa sarrihuhunna sarahan jamila*" ("When you set them free, show them kindness and generosity").

Muslims do not believe in pre-existence, but they believe in the life after death. According to the Qur'án, death does not bring the life of man to an end; it only opens the door to a higher form of life. Just as from dust is evolved the man, from the deeds which man does is evolved the higher man. According to the Qur'án, man's life in this world is not without an aim, and the aim is to attain to a higher life. The life after death is one of the fundamentals of Islam, but not as a dogma. It opens out a wide vista of progress before man, a new world of advancement before which the progress of this world sinks into insignificance (The Qur'án 76:20).

The Qur'án establishes a connection between the two lives, the life on this earth and the life after death, in the

clearest words. Heaven and hell are not places of enjoyment and torture to be met with only after death ; they are realities even here. The hereafter is not a mystery beyond the grave, it begins in this very life. For the good the heavenly life, and for the wicked a life in hell, begins even here, and as there are two paradises for the former there are two chastisements for the latter, i.e., a paradise and a chastisement for this life, and a paradise and a chastisement for the next (The Qur'án 55 : 46, 89 : 27-30, 102 : 5-6, 17 : 72).

But while the life after death is spoken of in the Qur'án as a continuation of this life, a particular day is repeatedly mentioned in it under various names as the day on which that life finds a complete manifestation. It is called by various names, for instance, the day of the great rising, the day of reckoning, etc.

The life after death takes two forms: a life in paradise for those in whom the good predominates over evil and a life in hell for those in whom the evil preponderates over good. Although the Qur'án speaks of the beautiful shady gardens with streams of milk and honey, the paradise according to it is not a place for simple enjoyment or rest ; it is essentially a place for advancement to higher and higher stages (The Qur'án 39 : 20). As to hell, it is not a place which is meant for torture but for purification, in order to make a man fit for spiritual advancement. It is for this reason that the Qur'án makes a difference between the abiding in paradise and the abiding in hell, allowing a termination in the latter case but not in the former (The Qur'án 6 : 129, 11 : 106-7). The Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said in this connection, " Surely a day will come over hell when there shall not be a single human being in it ". Hell, according to the Qur'án, is a manifestation of hidden realities (86 : 9), and a means of purifying a man of the dross which he has produced with his own hands, just as fire purifies gold of dross.

In Islam there are various schools of thought

but no sects,[1] and the two principal ones — the Shi'ah and the Sunnis — are mostly political rather than religious. The Shi'ah and the Sunnis came into existence after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, who did not designate explicitly any of his companions to lead the community after him. But certain acts of his were interpreted as indicative of his father-in-law, Abu Bakr, as a possible successor. Such was his appointment of him as a leader of the Muslims in prayer during his illness. Others put forward the claims of 'Ali, the Prophet's cousin, as superior, since he was his cousin and married to the Prophet's daughter, Fatima. This difference of opinion as to the right successor of the Prophet concerned his worldly office alone, since the office of prophecy was closed after his death because Muhammad is the " Seal of Prophets ", and no prophet is expected after him. This political difference eventually led to great strife and to unhappy events, the most noteworthy of which was the civil war between 'Ali (d. 661 C.E.) and Mu'awiya (d. 680 C.E.), in which (after almost six years of 'Ali's Caliphate) Mu'awiya emerged as the sole master of the Arab Empire. But the followers of 'Ali continued the struggle after his murder at the hand of one of his former followers, who were known as *al-Khawarij* (the *Separatists*), better (known as) the " Puritans of Islam ". They wanted the successors to the Caliphate to be chosen or elected and the Caliphate not to be inherited. They are, to use modern terminology, constitutionalists. Unfortunately, for various reasons, they lost the day, with the result that Islam became heredity ridden. The principal feature of their political thought is that they do not believe in hereditary rulership.

1 I advisedly say no sects; for amongst the 450,000,000 Muslims of today or of yesterday there was and is not any difference on the fundamentals of Islam — all over the world there is but one text of the Qur'án; all followers of Islam are strict monotheists both in conduct and belief, which they exemplify by their sincerity, and all accept Muhammad as a prophet of God. Muhammad has never been deified by Muslims throughout the last 1,400 years. All adhere to the belief that mankind is one, because God is one. The difference of opinion should not be confused with difference in fundamentals.

Within these two major Muslim political sections there arose different schools of law. The differing political theories had to give birth to differing schools of law — the schools of the Shi'ah law and the Sunni law. The Sunni law is represented by the four schools: the *Hanafi,* the *Shafi'i,* the *Maliki* and the *Hanbali,* mentioned in their order of importance and according to the number of their followers. These schools appeared in the 'Abbasid period when Islam reached its height of power and significance.

To explain what we mean by the 'Abbasid period we must point out that Muslim history is divided into the following periods:

(1) The period of the Orthodox Caliphs, extending from 632 C.E., the date of the Prophet's death, to 660 C.E. This was the time of the Muslim Republic, during which four Presidents, known as Caliphs, or successors of the Prophet, ruled. This was the period of early Islam when piety was rife and the ascetic way of life was by and large the fashion of the day.

(2) The Umayyad period, which extended from 660 C.E. to 750 C.E. after the abolition of the Arabic Republic and the establishment of a monarchy under the house of the Umayya, the former opponents and persecutors of the Prophet. Hence the State at this time was more Arab than Muslim. Arab conquests in this period reached their zenith, extending the Arab Empire from Southern France to Central Asia. This was the only time during which the Arabs had a purely Arab kingdom; all the other periods were characterized by Muslim rather than Arab aspirations.

(3) The Abbasid period, which covered five centuries, extending from 750 C.E., the date of the fall of the Umayyad kingdom in Damascus, to 1258 C.E., the time of the destruction of Baghdad at the hands of the Mongols. The most illustrious Caliphs of the Abbasids were al-Mansur (d. 775 C.E.), Harun al-Rashid (d. 809 C.E.), the immortal figure of *The Arabian Nights,* and al-Ma'mun, the philosopher king.

(4) After 1258 C.E. we have what we call *al-'Usur al-*

Mudhlimah (the Dark Ages), which extended from the middle of the thirteenth century to the rise early in the eighteenth century of Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, who started a revivalist-Puritan movement in Arabia.

Today, after the rise of Pakistan with her 65,000,000 Muslims and Indonesia with her 75,000,000 Muslims, Islam is once again becoming a formidable power in world politics. This is because Islam is a progressive religion. In fact, the Muslims lost their former glory and fell to a wretched position only when they deviated from the early pure principles of Islam and incorporated superstitions and false beliefs and considered them as part of the Muslim faith, such as the belief in fate, or *kismet*, which is nowhere in the Qur'án mentioned or even referred to.

Islam is a democratic religion. The lesson in democracy is learnt by a king and a slave in the precincts of the mosque when they put their foreheads to the ground in performing their prayers. As a result of this there is not the least colour consciousness in Islam. The Prophet Muhammad's official announcer of prayers was Bilal, a Negro from Africa. Indeed, the Prophet even went so far as to entrust the command of a whole army that was bound for Syria to the son of a slave called Zayd Ibn Haritha. In the same army were great men like 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab, who later became Caliph, a legislator, and the organizing brain of the conquest of Iraq, Syria and Egypt. In later centuries a Negro slave became the sovereign of Egypt. He was named Kafur al-Ikhshidi. In India a ruling dynasty known as the Slave Dynasty was founded by a slave. It ruled over India from 1203 C.E. to 1287 C.E. Instances of the absence of all colour prejudice in Islam are many. The same mosques that are used by white Muslims are used by the black Muslims.

As to slavery, it is often said that Muhammad did not abolish slavery. There are others who say this in a way as if Muhammad himself was responsible for the continuation of this abomination of an institution. To understand the mind of Muhammad let us see how he felt for the slaves and what

he did to ameliorate their condition ; it is but in the fitness of things to remind ourselves of the fact that his predecessors, like Jesus, did not even raise their voices of protest against the cruel treatment of slaves or against the disgraceful traffic so prevalent in their own times. This serious omission on the part of Jesus made Christianity, as a religion, quite indifferent for centuries to the severe tortures and the degraded position of the enormous slave population and produced amongst its followers slave-dealers of the worst type as late as the dawn of the eighteenth century. Muhammad was the first man in the history of the world who felt commiseration for the slave class. His religion was the first creed that made the liberation of slaves a matter of great virtue and preached abolition of slavery.

Muhammad, a man of action, knew that slavery was a most popular institution upheld by usage and past civilizations everywhere ; it supplied a most valuable form of property. He realized that it was interwoven with various aspects of the then social life and that its abolition would strike at the very foundation of the social fabric. He also knew that slavery owed its origin to wars. War as yet has not left mankind, and the only conceivable check to it would be to award, where possible, some deterrent punishment to the aggressor, when defeated. In olden days the males of the defeated enemy were killed or mutilated ; later they were taken as slaves. Indemnity or captivity came to be regarded as a natural demand of a conqueror from the vanquished ; modern civilization upholds it as well. But inhuman treatment awarded to captives everywhere in the pre-Islamic world made war-bondage identical with slavery. War prisonership was indispensable, but something was needed to better the condition of the captives. It is to this and the slaves that Muhammad directed his attention.

To begin with, the Qur'án declared that only war-bondage that resulted from fighting in self-defence was permitted. In other words, a Muslim has been forbidden, under the clear teaching of the Qur'án, to make others his

slaves ; he may make prisoners of others, but only in a self-defensive fight. In order to make distinction between the two — the slave and the war captive — the Qur'án does not style the latter *'abd*, the Arabic equivalent of the word " slave ". " Those whom your right hands possess " is the term used by the Qur'án to designate that class. It not only defines the exclusive mode in which a man could be brought under a Muslim's bondage, but it shows also that a Muslim's bondsman is not a slave, but a fallen foe, otherwise his equal, and that he should either be ransomed or set free out of favour ; and the latter was the course which was in most cases adopted by the Prophet Muhammad himself.

When the Qur'án and the Prophet use the word *'abd* (slave) as regards persons in bondage, it should be remembered that the reference in such case is only to such as were already in bondage under the old custom. As to the liberation of such bondsmen, this presented a difficulty of a very intricate nature. The immediate abolition of slavery was likely to cause many and far-reaching complications. The slave class possessed no wealth. They had neither house nor property, trade, nor learning. Their immediate emancipation would have produced a class of penniless vagabonds and indolent beggars, seeing that their lifelong habit of abject dependence on their masters had killed all initiative in them. The task of Islam was not only to secure freedom for those already in slavery, but to make them useful members of society. As historical records show, the Prophet Muhammad was quite alive to the seriousness of the situation.

European scholars who have studied Islam with an unbiased mind have come to the conclusion that Islamic teachings do condemn slavery and aim at its abolition, and the only legal cause of bringing others into bondage is prisonership of war ; and as long as war continues in the world the system must continue. I here give the opinion of the famous Dutch Orientalist, Professor Snouck Hurgronje, on the question of slavery in his book *Mahommedanism* (p. 150), New York, U.S.A., 1916:

" The law of Islam regulated the position of slaves with much equity ; there is a great body of testimony from people who have spent a part of their lives among Muhammadan nations which does justice to the benevolent treatment which bondsmen receive from their masters there. Besides that, we are bound to state that in many Western countries, or countries under Western domination, whole groups of the population live under circumstances with which those of Muhammadan slavery may be compared to advantage.

" The only legal cause of slavery is prisonership of war, or birth from slave parents. The captivity of enemies of Islam has not at all necessarily the effect of enslaving them ; for the competent authorities may dispose of them in any other way, including the way prescribed by modern international law or custom. In proportion to the realization of the political ideal of Islam, the number of its enemies must diminish and the possibility of enslaving men consequently decrease. Setting slaves free is one of the most meritorious works, and at the same time the regular atonement for certain transgressions of the sacred law. According to the Muhammadan principle, slavery is an institution destined to disappear."

In order to create fraternal feeling between master and slave, the Prophet Muhammad said : " Verily, your brothers are your slaves ; God has placed them under you. Whoever, then, has his brother under him, he should feed him with food of which he himself eats, and clothe him with such clothing as he himself wears. And do not impose on him a duty which is beyond his power to perform ; or if you command them to do what they are unable to do, then assist them in that affair." This principle of brotherhood between master and slave, which was worked out to the very letter, evinces that largeness of soul that has been met with in no other philanthropist or founder of a religion. In order to raise the status of the class, the Prophet laid special stress upon the good breeding and education of slave-girls. The Prophet Muhammad said: " If a man has a slave-girl in his posses-

sion and he instructs her in polite accomplishments and gives her a good education, without inflicting any chastisement upon her, and then frees her and marries her, he shall be rewarded with a double reward."

"Fear God in the matter of prayer and in the matter of those whom your right hand possesses," were the words repeated by the Prophet Muhammad on his deathbed, which show that no one else could feel so great an anxiety for the slave class. These are the last words he uttered ; and mark how he makes the duty of being constant in prayer identical with kindness to slaves.

On his last pilgrimage, three months before he died, Muhammad gave a famous farewell speech, in which he said :

"And your slaves — see that ye feed them with such food as ye eat yourselves, and clothe them with the like clothing that ye wear yourselves ; and if they commit a fault which ye are inclined not to forgive, set them free ; for they are the servants of the Lord, and are not to be tormented."

One or two things may be mentioned here to show further how Islamic law favours the war captive and the slave. In adultery a female slave is given half the punishment that is meted out to a free woman, because she is regarded less guilty on account of her not possessing full freedom and responsibility. If a slave shows piety and good conduct, he is given the chance to obtain his freedom. This is done by a written document or in the presence of two witnesses or by handing to the slave the certificate of manumission given by his former master. All this stands in marked contrast to the injunctions of the Old Testament, which speaks only of the emancipation of Israelite slaves who had become bondmen through debt. Muhammad speaks of the emancipation of all kinds of slaves.

The Prophet Muhammad enjoined extreme care in the matter of orphans and promised severe chastisement to those who ill-treated them. Muhammad himself was an orphan and had tasted the bitterness of being deprived of the care and kindness of one's parents. The Qur'án, 4:21,

has the following to say about those who devour the property of the orphans: "They who devour the possessions of orphans unjustly shall swallow nothing but fire in their bellies, and shall broil in raging flames."

Filial obedience and piety is also stressed in the Qur'án. "Your Lord," says the Qur'án, "hath commanded that you worship Him only, and that you do good to your parents, whether one of them or both of them attain to old age with you. And do not show the least disgust with them, and reproach them not, but speak kindly to them, and act submissively and humbly towards them out of tender affection, and say, 'O Lord, have mercy on them both, as they nursed me when I was a child'."

In inheritance Muhammad made a great advance over the pre-Islamic laws prevalent in Arabia before his time. The reform introduced by Islam into the rules relating to inheritance is twofold: it makes the female a co-sharer with the male and divides the property of the deceased person among his heirs on a democratic basis instead of handing it to the eldest son as is due by the law of primogeniture. The Arabs had a very strong tradition that he alone could inherit who smites with the spear. Thus the children and women were deprived of any share in the deceased man's property. Only those who were capable of bearing arms and defending the tribe were given shares. The Qur'án ordained that they should all have their shares. The law of the Qur'án placed the widows and orphans on a level of equality with those who fought for the defence of the tribe and country. If, however, there was no heir at all, the property went to the Government treasury, or *Bait al-Mal.*

In every respect Muhammad had in view the welfare and improvement of the community as a whole. That is why the Qur'án refers time and again to the question of almsgiving, which occurs in thirty chapters of the Qur'án. The Qur'án lays so much emphasis on this that it even goes so far as to couple it with pious prayers all the time. Alms,

according to Islam, is of two kinds, the *Zakat* (legal alms) and *Sadaqat* (voluntary alms).

" You cannot," says the Qur'án, " attain to righteousness until you expend in alms of what you love ; but what you expend in alms, that God knoweth " (3 : 86). To understand in what light almsgiving was held among the Muslims of early Islam we have only to listen to the pious Umayyad Caliph 'Umar Ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz (717-720 C.E.), who once said : " Prayer carries us half-way to God ; fasting brings us to the door of His palace, and alms procures for us admission ". Since generosity is a prominent characteristic of the Arabs, the precept of almsgiving greatly appealed to them and helped to raise the standard of the community both materially and morally. A good proportion of the wealth collected by the Government from *Zakat,* or legal alms, was devoted to the building of mosques in various parts of the vast Muslim commonwealth of nations. It is true that this custom of giving part of one's property away to the poor was known among the Arabs before the rise of Islam. Wealthy merchants of spices, for instance, were not allowed to sell any until they had paid the tithe to their god, Sabis. What Islam did was not only to sanction but to regulate on an official basis an already existing custom.

Muhammad did abolish polygamy advisedly. For, however distasteful the idea may appear to be, the fact remains that all societies pass through certain stages in their development when plurality of marriages becomes a desirable necessity. One of such stages always occurs after wars in which the male population is reduced in much larger proportion than under normal circumstances. In the case of an individual this may take the form of a wife's chronic illness or some other disability. Besides these considerations, it should not be forgotten that polygamy according to the Qur'án is a permission, and not a compulsion. This permission is designed to keep society morally healthy. Under abnormal circumstances which arise after long wars, no other institution but controlled and regulated polygamy as designed

by the Qur'án can help. However, I must confess that it is a matter of great regret that this healthy device has been mishandled by some Muslims here and there. But for this backsliding the Qur'án and the teachings of the Prophet cannot be held responsible.

Leaving the sociological considerations alone, it must be admitted polygamy obtained among the Arabs and other Eastern as well as European nations for centuries before Muhammad. " It goes to his (Muhammad's) credit that he restricted polygamy to four wives, and even this permission is further restricted by the following provision explicitly set out in the Qur'án: ' If you fear that you cannot act with equity towards orphans, take in marriage of such women as please you two or three or four ; but, if you fear that you cannot act equitably (towards so many), marry one only '."[1] The importance of this sagacious step becomes apparent when we remember that this reasonable code was set forth early in the seventh century, though the German reformers, as late as the sixteenth century, admitted the validity of a second or third marriage contemporaneously with the first, in default of issue and other similar causes.[2] And Schopenhauer three centuries later praised the Mormons because they had made converts by throwing off what he termed the " unnatural bondage of monogamy ". Similar sentiments may be found in the works of Eduard von Hartmann, who observes that the natural instinct of man is in favour of polygamy, and that of woman in favour of monogamy.[3] In the light of these Western remarks, the Eastern Prophet finds ample excuse for not attempting to abolish polygamy. This reminds us of Solon's words to the Greeks, that his laws were not the best he could devise, but they were the best they could receive.[4] The fact that Islam gave the woman the right to divorce her husband just as he had the right to divorce her is an advance upon the Babylonian and Roman

1 Robert Robert, *The Social Laws of the Qur'án*, London, 1925.
2 Hallam, *Constitutional History of England*, Vol. I, p. 68.
3 *Philosophie des Bewusstseins*, Berlin, 1897.
4 Ibid.

codes and also the Old Testament code, which gives such a right to the man alone.[1]

In conclusion, on this vexed question I would like to remind my readers that not only is polygamy shared by one of the Christian sects, the Mormons, or the followers of the Church of Jesus Christ of the latter day saints, but also it is not forbidden anywhere in the Bible. On the contrary, we have a tacit approval of it when we read that a wise and respected prophet like Solomon had six hundred wives and a horde of concubines. Martin Luther had officially advised Philip of Hesse, Germany, that the New Testament did not prohibit polygamy. But, whatever the case may be, polygamy among Muslims of today is a thing of the past ; and this for many reasons, some economic, as in the case of people who cannot afford to have even one wife, others owing to the development of conditions of life in the East. But perhaps the most important reason of all is the fact that in the East there are more men than women.

So on this point Islam does not differ from Christianity any more than Christianity differs from Islam.

An abominable practice that prevailed among certain Arab tribes and was abolished by Muhammad was the burial alive of female children. This practice was well known among the ancients and in all probability was employed for one of four reasons: (a) to keep the population in check and to avoid undue over-population; (b) because of the poverty of the parents who could not afford to feed them ; (c) fear of disgrace brought on the parents if the girl grew up and married a man below the dignity of her family ; and (d) some thought they were being offered as sacrifices to their idols.

Anyway, Muhammad strictly forbade the killing of a child for any reason whatsoever. " Slay not your children," says the Qur'án, " for fear of poverty ; we will provide for them. Verily, to slay them is a great sin " (27 : 33).

1 *Philosophie des Bewusstseins,* Berlin, 1897.

This custom, which was abolished by Muhammad, was by no means confined to certain tribes of the Arabs. It was known among the Egyptians, the Chinese, the Romans and even among the Greeks.

C. W. C. Oman in his *History of Greece,* London, 1898, tells us: "The moment a Spartan was born, the State began to take cognizance of him. The infant was carried before the elders, who decided on his fate; if healthy, he was taken back to his parents, to be reared; if weakly, he was taken away and cast out on Taygetus, to perish by exposure."

A good Muslim is not supposed to drink wine or eat pork. The prohibition of drinking intoxicants in the Qur'án came in two stages: (a) the Qur'án says first *Wa la taqrabu 'l-Salata wa antum sukara* (Do not perform prayers while you are drunk); (b) later on an event took place that forbade the drinking of wine to all Muslims. One day Hamzah, the Prophet's uncle, in a fit of drunkenness, took a knife and slaughtered a number of camels belonging to 'Ali, the cousin of the Prophet. When he was reproached he shouted out, "Who do you think you are? You are just the slaves of my father!" Thereupon a verse was revealed prohibiting all intoxicants; for under the influence of intoxicants one loses self-control.

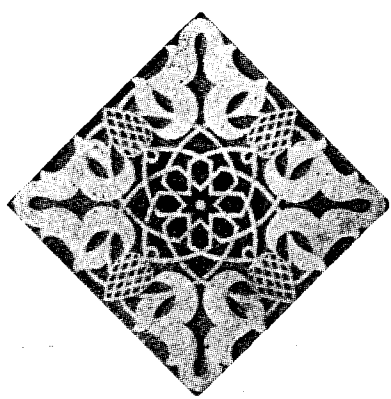
As for the pig's flesh, it was forbidden for various reasons, both spiritual and health. I would mention here one disease, known as *trychinesis,* caused mostly by eating unclean raw pork. Even at the present day we find that this disease has not been completely eradicated, especially on the Eastern coast of America, where a colleague of mine, at Yale University, suffered from it for some time.

As for our relations with people of other faiths, we have to respect them, especially if they belong to the Christian faith. They are known together with the Jews as *ahl al-Kitab* (the People of the Scriptures). The Christians are spoken very highly of in the Qur'án, where one of the verses runs as follows: "Surely the nearest to the hearts

of the Muslim believers are those who say we are Christians, because amongst them are priests and monks who do not show arrogance " (5 : 82).

* * *

Islam can appropriately be termed the " Universal Religion ". Apart from the fact that a Muslim is bound to believe in all the great religions of the world (hence all the faiths of the world are embodied in one), Islam shows its universal aspect in another way, in that it holds no class or colour distinctions. It is for the black, yellow and the white. There are no special mosques for white men and others for Negroes, as is the case in the United States and South Africa, where there are churches for white and others for black people, and no black Muslim is ostracised or lynched if he marries a white Muslim. Islam is for all classes : it is for the labourer as well as the king, and they both stand equal before God.



A tile in the Moorish palace, the Alhambra, at Granada, Spain.

CHAPTER III

A CHRISTIAN NAMES HIS SON "MUHAMMAD"

Maron Bey Abbood, a modern Christian poet and writer, has gone so far in his admiration of the Prophet as to name his own son "Muhammad", which thing has never been done by any Christian before. When his friends and co-religionists reproached him vehemently for this and considered him an infidel, he answered them in a beautiful poem, of which the following lines are an extract:

"May you live long, O best of lads,
Who wast born in the month of Rajab
We named him Muhammad and exclaimed:
O History, do not be surprised,
Lessen your amazement
And bow your head, if you see
The son of Maron the namesake of the Prophet.
His mother did not bear him as a Muslim,
Nor a Christian, but an Arab[1]
And verily the Chosen Qurayshite Prophet
Is the miracle of the East, the pride of the Arabs.

My son, be proud of an immortal name
And if you live, remember your most faithful father,
Who did what no other Christian before him did
In bygone centuries:
For I am the opponent of traditions
Which threw the East amidst the worst of dissensions.
Mock at their superstitions and say:
'And thus behaved my father before me!'
Tomorrow, my son, when you will see
My track being followed, you will be proud of me.

1 This is reminiscent of a Tradition of the Prophet Muhammad, who once observed that a child was born neither a Christian nor a Jew, and that it was the parents who made him one thing or the other.

With thee, my son, I have dissented from my co-religionists,
Hoping for the dawn of a Golden Age:
The Age of a revived Nation,
The Age of uniting the remnants of the Arabs.
Blessed is the day which will gather us together
From the banks of the Nile down to Yathrib,
So that we can honour one flag that flutters
On the minarets and domes of the Nation.

Would that my son knew the troubles I met with
When I named him!
If only he knew in his cradle the deeds
Of those who were prompted by the dynamite of anger,
He would have refused to live and would have preferred
Death in a nation that had forsaken serious matters
In pursuit of jest.

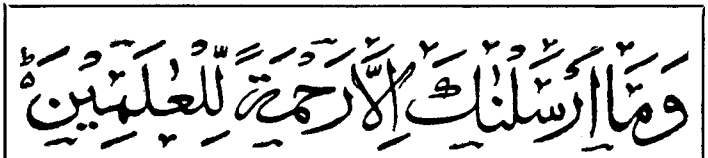
How often people said of me, 'What an infidel he is,
He will burn in hell fire!'
'If he exposes his son to notoriety, no wonder,
For he is a foolish infidel without faith.'

Do not believe what they say, my son,
For what they say is nothing but downright lies.
Indeed, the love of the people is my religion,
The life of my country unified, is my aim,
My Book is justice amongst mankind
In a land which is the homeland of Divine Books.
Follow, therefore, my son, a father
Who was hated by every stupid fanatic:
They have been the pestilence of this East of ours
Ever since they ruled it with all manner of terror:
They drove Ahmad out of his bed
To spend his night journeying in grief
And they afflicted Jesus with a calamity

For what he taught them.
And had it not been for their wiles, he would not have been crucified."[1]

Another famous Christian writer who greatly admired Muhammad was the well-known Lebanese lady, Mary Ziyadah, known to the Arab public as al-Aanisah May (Miss May). She was an ardent Roman Catholic, yet she did not hesitate to say: ". . . Christianity is more theoretical; whereas Islam is both theoretical and practical. Now Islam found slavery among many nations that had preceded it, so it accepted it but mitigated its evils to a very great extent. . . . It ordained kindness to the orphan, the weak, and the slave. The first to respond to those injunctions was the Arabian Prophet himself, who wept over his dead slave as a noble-hearted man would weep over a dear friend. So the position of the slave in Muhammad's religion was most exemplary. As for emancipation of slaves and the preaching for it, that constitutes one of the most glorious chapters in Muslim history."[2]

1 Maron 'Abbood Zawabi', Beyrouth, 1946, pp. 36-38. The poet has also glorified the Prophet in another long ode, *ibid.*, pp. 227-234.
2 *al-Anisah,* May; *al-Musawat,* p. 58. (I am indebted for this reference to Iraq's poetess-laureate, 'Atika, who drew my attention to it.)



"And We have not sent you (Muhammad) but as a mercy to mankind" (The Qur'án, 21 : 107).

CHAPTER IV

HOW MUCH OF EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION IS ISLAMIC?

Many uneducated or semi-educated people think that European civilization is all the product of Europe. They forget that several other nations have contributed to it and that it has incorporated more than one other foreign civilization. The most noticeable and by far the most effective of all is the Muslim civilization. Its influence has not been confined to one or two fields. It has practically permeated all departments of life: science, literature, architecture, medicine, arts and music.

How much is the West indebted to the Muslim East? This question has not yet been answered adequately. We shall not be able to give an accurate answer to it until all the manuscripts of Cairo, Damascus, Baghdad, Persia, India and the Escurial are thoroughly studied and their contents are brought to light. Until then we shall content ourselves by saying that the Western debt is great.

The Muslims started scientific research as early as 661 C.E. The greatest centre from which this research was conducted was the Academy of Jundeshpur, Iran, a member of which translated Ahron's *Pandects*[1] into Arabic, which may be regarded as the first scientific work in that language.

Though the details concerning the scientific aspect of the time of the Umayyads (684-745 C.E.) in Damascus are not yet clear, those of the Abbasids are much more abundant and better studied. The Abbasids began their rule in 750 C.E.

1 The digest, or abridgement, in fifty books of the decisions, writings and opinions of the old Roman jurists, made in the sixth century by direction of the Emperor Justinian and forming the leading translation of the Roman civil law.

and at the very dawn of that rule appears the figure of Jabir Ibn Hayyan, the Geber of the Latin annals, the father of alchemy. Jabir wrote many scientific treatises which were unfortunately lost, excepting one on poisons that was recently recovered by Max Meyerhof. At the time of the second Abbasid Caliph the Academy of Jundeshpur doubled its research activities, giving impetus to the translation of Greek works into Arabic. In the ninth century, a regular school for translation equipped with a library was established in Baghdad by the Caliph al-Ma'mun (d. 833 C.E.). The most voluminous part of the Greek scientific legacy was rendered into Arabic through the medium of this school. Several works of eminent Greek scholars were lost in the original and were preserved in their Arabic translations. This new school was a great rival of the Jundeshpur Academy. Eventually the latter dwindled and finally disappeared, its members having one by one been drawn to the illustrious capital of the Abbasids — Baghdad.

Translations apart, the Muslim scientists wrote innumerable original works. In physics the name of the Arab philosopher al-Kindi (850 C.E.) stands prominent. He is reported to have written no less than 265 works. His works greatly influenced the English scientist Roger Bacon (1294 C.E.) and other Western scientists. Arabic works on lapidary were later translated, and regarded as good patterns for imitation by Western writers. So, many precious stones, plants and drugs bear in European languages Arabic or Persian names, e.g., *bezoar* (Persian: *pad-zahr,* i.e., protecting against poison), camphor (Arabic word of Persian origin) and galanga-root (Persian: *khulinjan*).

The Muslims learnt paper manufacturing from the Chinese and passed it on to the West. In 797 C.E. the first Muslim paper establishment was set up in Baghdad.

In the golden age of Muslim scholarship al-Razi (Latin: *Rhazes*) (d. 932 C.E.) appears. He was by the explicit admission of Western writers one of the great

physicians of all time.[1] His book on *Smallpox and Measles* was first translated into Latin, then into all the important European languages. The English version was printed forty times between 1498 and 1886.[2] His other work, *al-Hawi* (The Comprehensive Book) was reproduced in translation form several times and had a profound influence on European knowledge of medicine.

Arabic systematization reached its apogee in the *Canon of Medicine* by Avicenna (d. 1037 C.E.), which affected the Western scholars with the mania of subdivision in their system of classification. The *Canon* remained one of the standard works that was read in Europe till the second half of the seventeenth century. Surgery also found its place in the Muslim pursuit of learning. Abulcasis (Arabic : Ab al-Qasim) of Cordova (d.*ca.* 1013 C.E.) wrote a complete section in his *al-Tasrif* on this department of medicine. His work contained illustrations of instruments used, and it can be said with justice that it laid the foundations of surgery in Europe.

But whatever one may say about Muslim medicine and Muslim surgery, the greatest medical glory of Islam lies in its contribution to ophthalmology. As late as the first half of the eighteenth century, the excellent treatises of 'Ammar of Mosul, Iraq, continued to be the best books on eye diseases. Mas'udi (d. 956 C.E.), in his voluminous work, *Muruj al-Dhahab* (The Meadows of Gold), gives a description of the first windmill, which is in all probability a Muslim invention. He also gives the rudiments of the theory of evolution. In *Optics,* Alhazen's[3] (d. 1039 C.E.) name may be quoted with pride. The English philosopher Roger Bacon (d. 1294 C.E.) and all medieval European writers, including the Italian genius, Leonardo da Vinci (d. 1519 C.E.), and the German

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1 Dr. Max Meyerhof, Science and Medicine, in *The Legacy of Islam,* by Sir Thomas Arnold and Professor A. Guillaume, Oxford, 1931, p. 323.

2 Ibid.

3 In Arabic the name is 'Ali al-Hasan Ibn al-Haytham. He was born at Basra, Iraq, in 996 C.E.

astronomer Johann Kepler (d. 1630 C.E.), based their works on Alhazen's *Opticae Thesaurus*. The first hospital in the ninth century was established in Baghdad. Roving hospitals in the Muslim world came into existence in the eleventh century. Special wards for men and women with dispensaries were installed. In certain hospitals, even a library was annexed, which is also a common feature of modern European hospitals. In Cadiz, Spain, a physician initiated a botanical garden especially for medicinal plants.

It is a peculiar fact that a mosque was not only a place of worship: it was also a school, for lectures were held there and every mosque had a library attached to it. In them one could find, along with works on theological subjects, those on science and medicine. Just as the mosques helped the progress of learning and research, so did the religious pilgrimage to Mecca. Students from India and Spain, Asia Minor and Africa often visited *en route* academies, libraries and hospitals, and acquired fresh knowledge from them that was not available in their native towns.

The next strongest point of Muslim scientists after the department of ophthalmology was pharmacology. In this field Ibn al-Baytar (1248 C.E.), born at Malaga, Spain, stands prominent. In his *Collection of Simple Drugs,* he describes 1,400 varieties that he collected over a belt extending from Spain to Syria. It is the greatest Arabic book on botany. Arabic pharmacology continued to influence Europe as late as the nineteenth century. Ibn al-Baytar's treatises were read and studied until 1830.

Psychology, especially racial psychology, also found a place in Arabic scientific research. In this respect Avicenna's importance cannot be denied. For instance, on the subject of the nature of the plague, or the Black Death, as it was called, Ibn al-Khatib's treatise was considered even by Europeans themselves as superior to all treatises written by Europeans between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. The contagious nature of the disease established by Ibn

al-Khatib was not emphasized by Greek specialists, and was practically ignored by most of the medieval European practitioners.

The hypothesis of the greater density of water when nearer to the centre of the earth was proved by al-Khazin before Roger Bacon.

Muslim sciences, compared with those of the Greeks, were on the whole more practical and derived mainly from actual observations. In fact, in optics the mathematical genius of Alhazen (Ibn al-Haytham, d. 1020 C.E.) and Kamal al-Din (d. 1320 C.E.) surpassed that of Euclid and Ptolemy.

The fall of Toledo in 1085 C.E. and that of Sicily in 1091 C.E. to the Muslims marked the beginning of a new chapter in human learning and civilization: European awakening was ushered in. Two movements began — Arabism and Hellenism. Both movements continued to struggle until about 1550, when they both succumbed before the Renaissance, which was the legitimate child of the two querulous parents.

It is only recently that the world has hailed Britain's new medical scheme of offering free medical treatment. My readers will be surprised to know that nationalization of doctors and hospitals existed in the Muslim world at the time of the Almohades, rulers of Spain in the twelfth century.[1]

A foreigner could enter any of the Muslim hospitals and obtain free treatment. If poor, he was given money after leaving hospital for the whole period of his convalescence, until he was able to work again. The Sultan Ya'qub Ibn al-Mansur kept a vigilant eye on these hospitals.[2]

Men doctors apart, there were women doctors, famous amongst whom was the sister of the grandson of Abu Bakr Ibn Zuhr, and her daughter.[3]

In dentistry during the early Middle Ages, ". . . a leading Arab physician was preaching the cleansing of the mouth

1 'Al-Marakushi, *al-Mu'jib*, pp. 190-191.
2 Ibid.
3 *Tabaqat al-Atibba'*, II, p. 70.

and teeth, not only by medicated washes but by the use of pure water as a priceless agent in dental health. As a matter of fact, the real debt due to the Muslims for progress in dental as well as in medical science is rarely appreciated. It is true that their methods slowly and partially superseded many of the erroneous teachings of Hippocrates and Galen, but the operation of filling decayed teeth with gold foil, for example, was apparently known to the physician in attendance on the Abbasid Caliph, Harun al-Rashid (837 C.E.); and that medieval genius of Arabian surgery, Abulcasis, who lived in the tenth century, was in many respects far ahead of his time, not least in the stress he laid upon the importance of the early recognition and treatment of pyorrhoea, evidently then, as now, a widespread oral malady. At an even earlier date, Rhazes, a Persian of noble birth, employed opium to relieve pain and arsenic as a filling for dental cavities . . .".[1]

THE ARABS AND THE AEROPLANE

The Spanish Arabs were the first to think of the possibilities of flying. *Nafh al-Tib min Ghusn al-Andalus al-Ratib,* a tenth century book on the history of Spain, has the following to say on the matter:

" Abu 'l-Qasim Ibn Firnas, the savant of Spain, was the first to discover the manufacture of glass from sandstone, and he was the first to unravel the book of prosody of al-Khalil and explain music and invent the machine known as *al-Mithqal* to tell the time . . . he also devised a means for flying, by covering his body with feathers and affixing two wings to it. He managed to fly in the air for a long distance, but his device was not perfected as regards his coming down, so his bottom was injured, because he did not know that a bird usually fell on his hind part, thus he forgot to construct a tail. . . . When Ibn Firnas wanted to exhibit his invention before the people of Cordoba, a huge crowd gathered to watch him, but his success was small because

1 *Fortnightly Review* for June, 1929, pp. 804-7; see *The Islamic Review* for July, 1929, p. 256.

he could not move his plane in the air. He remained stationary in one spot, then he fell on the ground."

It is not surprising that the Arabs should have made such an attempt, since for centuries they had been dreaming of such an invention. The flying carpet in *The Arabian Nights* is but one aspect of this long-cherished dream.

The Arabs were the first to discover America

Many think that Columbus was the first man to discover America, but the Arabs preceded him. When the Genoese sailor wanted to make his adventurous attempt to reach India by sailing westwards, it was the Arab geographers and cartographers who offered him advice and provided him with maps.[1] An important theory that influenced Columbus (which was a legacy from Islam) was the " *Arin* Theory ". It claimed that the Eastern hemisphere had a central summit equidistant from North, South, East and West. Consequently, Columbus thought that there should be such an *Arin,* or central summit, on the Western hemisphere as well.

Yet a Western scholar, the late Professor J. H. Kramers, of Holland, would mildly say, " Islamic geographical theory may claim a share in the discovery of the New World "![2]

It is highly probable that Ahmad Ibn Majid, the man who helped Vasco da Gama in his exploration of the Indian Ocean, was the inventor of the compass,[3] which was a great help to Columbus.

The Spanish mystic philosopher, Ibn 'Arabi (d. 1240 C.E.), seems to be the first man to think of the existence of another continent beyond the Atlantic Ocean.[4] According to

1 This was not the only time that Arab geographers and sailors helped European discoverers, for when Vasco da Gama, after his circumnavigation of Africa in 1498, he had an Arab pilot to show him the way to India. He possessed a good sea map and maritime instruments. J. H. Kramers, *The Legacy of Islam.*

2 J. H. Kramers, Geography and Commerce, in *The Legacy of Islam,* Oxford, 1931.

3 J. H. Kramers, *The Legacy of Islam.*

4 Muhammad al-Manuni, *al-'Ulum wa al-Adab wa al-Funun 'ala 'ahd al-Muwahhidin* (al-Matba'a al-mahdiyya, Tatwan, Morocco, 1950).

the father of modern history, Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406 C.E.), Ibn Rushd, known in Europe as Averroes (d. 1199 C.E.), used to say: "There is beyond the equator in the south exactly what there is in the north. Whatever land there is here has its counterpart there."[1]

Al-Sharif al-Idrisi, a great Arab geographer (1154 C.E.), relates in his book *al-Nuzha* the story of the three conceited brothers who sailed the Atlantic Ocean to see its boundary and find out what there was inside it. Their adventure led them to the Antille Islands between North and South America.[2] As for Ibn Fatim, the celebrated Muslim geographer and explorer, he managed to explore West Africa.[3]

In music Muslim influence is not very hard to prove, considering that so many European musical instruments have Arabian origin. Here are a few with their Arabic equivalents: Bugle, *Buq*; lute, *al-'ud*; tambourine, *tambur*; rebec, *rabab*; guitar, *qithara*; naker, *naqqara*, etc.

Words connected with music like "masker" (Spanish: *mascara*) and troubadours cannot fail to show their Arabic origin; they are *maskhara*=buffoon, and *mutribun*= entertainers.

One of the main uses of music and singing which was later borrowed by the troubadours of Provence was for spreading political views or expressing them to the ruler in a subtle way.[4]

The Arabs improved on the Greek musical theorists. Dr. Farmer, a British scholar and one of the greatest authorities on Arabian music, has the following to say:

"The introduction to al-Farabi's *Grand Book on Music* is certainly equal, if not superior, to anything that has come down to us from Greek sources. In the theory of the physical bases of sound the Arabs certainly made some advance,

1 Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddima.*
2 Muhammad al-Manuni, op. cit.
3 *Masalik al-Absar.*
4 H. G. Farmer, "Music," in *The Legacy of Islam*, Oxford, 1931, p. 362.

especially on the question of the spherical propagation of sound. Indeed, it is highly probable that when the works of the Arabic theorists have been edited with an adequate *apparatus criticus,* many a debatable word or passage in the Greek writers will be illuminated."[1]

Al-Farabi, one of the foremost Muslim theorists, continued to be the centre of interest in Europe till the seventeenth century. The Muslim faculty of music and other faculties were so high compared with those of Europe that when Roger Bacon was once speaking at Oxford to a gathering of Spanish students the latter kept secretly smiling at his faulty knowledge, as he was using the imperfect Latin translations of works which they knew in the original Arabic. The enthusiasm for Arabic and Muslim universities and schools became so great among the Europeans that men no less than Dr. Mirabilis and Adelard of Bath strongly recommended the leaving of European schools in favour of those of Muslims.[2] In fact, their enthusiasm was as great as that of the Muslims for European universities today.

Mensural music is probably the greatest legacy that the Muslims left to Europe. Measured song prior to 1190 was unknown among Europeans. The Arabs knew it from the seventh century under the term of *Iqa'*, or rhythm. It is fully described in a treatise by al-Kindi (d. 874 C.E.): "Not only mensural values in the notes, but even the rhythmic modes that we see in Franco of Cologne (*c.* 1190 C.E.?) and his school appear to have been derived originally from the Arabs. In the Latin treatise *De mensuris et discantu* we have particular kinds of notes bearing such names as *elmuahym* and *elmuarifa,* which are of Arabic origin. The Medieval *hocket,* which Robert de Handlo says is 'a combination of notes and pauses,' is the Arabic *iqa'at.*

The most effective channel for disseminating Arabian music in Western Europe was the minstrels. Harmony as it is known in Europe was probably stimulated by the *tarkib*

1 H. G. Farmer, "Music," in *The Legacy of Islam,* Oxford, 1931, pp. 367-368.
2 Ibid., p. 371.

(combination), which was the striking of a note simultaneously with its fourth, fifth or octave. Also the word conductus, a form of composition known in the Middle Ages, is so reminiscent of the Arabian *majra.* And the *musica ficta* is only the Arabian lute perfected later by Spanish musicians.

Attempts to introduce Muslim melodies and Oriental effects of orchestration into European music have not been wanting. In the nineteenth century experimentation on this line was carried out by Rubinstein, Felicien David, Sainte-Saëns and others.[1]

According to the French scholar, Baron Carra de Vaux, ". . . the Arabs have really achieved great things in science; they taught the use of ciphers . . . and thus became the founders of the arithmetic of everyday life; they made algebra an exact science and developed it considerably and laid the foundations of analytical geometry; they were indisputably the founders of plane and spherical trigonometry which, properly speaking, did not exist among the Greeks. In astronomy they made a number of valuable observations. . . . The Arabs . . . formed a bond of union, a connecting link between ancient culture and modern civilization. . . . It was because the Arabs had preserved and perfected various branches of knowledge, kept the spirit of research alive and eager and maintained it pliant and ready for future discoveries. . . . They are more positive than the Greeks themselves."[2]

Logarithms were invented by the celebrated Muslim mathematician al-Khwarazmi, whose name in its corrupted Latin form gave the term *algorism,* alternatively written as al-gorithm.[3]

The Muslims knew the zero, which is of capital importance in the numeral system, at least 250 years before it was ever heard of in the West. Without the zero the Europeans had to keep each figure in its proper place by means of

1 H. G. Farmer, *The Legacy of Islam,* Oxford, 1931.
2 Carra de Vaux, "Astronomy and Mathematics," in *The Legacy of Islam,* Oxford, 1931.
3 Ibid.

columns of units, tens and hundreds, etc.[1] The words algebra, cipher, al-gorithm, etc., survive to this day in all the Western languages as reminders of Western debt in mathematical sciences to the Muslims.

"We know how music is related to mathematics . . . all the musical theory of the Arabs is expressed in terms of fractions. It contains logarithms *in posse,*"[2] hence the Arabs paid particular attention to this lore.

As for algebra, "'Omar Khayyam's (1123 C.E.) algebra represents a much more advanced state of this science than that we see among the Greeks."[3] "In arithmetic the Arabs made several discoveries, such as the magic squares and amicable numbers."[4]

Western debt to Muslim Architecture

In spite of the controversies of the various schools of architecture as to the origins of certain architectonic features, Mr. Martin S. Briggs, author of *Muhammadan Architecture,*[5] makes the following acknowledgment of the Western debt to Muslim architecture:

". . . We may reasonably ascribe the invention of the pointed arch to Muslim buildings in Syria and elsewhere. The ogee arch almost certainly, and the 'Tudor' arch possibly, have a similar origin. The use of cusps and of cusped or multifoil arches comes from the same source, as probably does the tracery patternings of surfaces, and perhaps even the use of bar-tracery in windows. Plate-tracery may be derived from the pierced geometrical lattices in stone and stucco of the early mosques, or it may have originated still farther back in pre-Islamic Syrian or Mesopotamian buildings. The invention of stained glass is sometimes attributed to the East, but that attribution has not yet been proved. The use of engaged shafts at the angles

1 Carra de Vaux, "Astronomy and Mathematics," in *The Legacy of Islam,* Oxford, 1931.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Oxford, 1924.

of piers, so important in the history of Gothic vaulting, is a Saracen innovation of the eighth or ninth century. Ornamental and pierced battlements came from Mesopotamia to Cairo and were thence transmitted to Italy, afterwards becoming a feature of Gothic architecture. The carved inscriptions used decoratively in late Gothic work were anticipated in the ninth century at Ibn Tulun's Mosque at Cairo, but inscriptions in Kufic characters[1] penetrated far into France during the Muslim occupation of her southern provinces, and rare examples of ornament even in England are believed to show Arabic influence. . . . The Arab *mashrabiyya* or lattice of woodwork . . . was copied in English metal grilles. The decoration of surfaces in low relief, by means of 'arabesques' or diaper patterns, and the use of geometrical patterns in decoration, is certainly a part of our debt to the Muslim peoples, who were also the source or channel of much of our knowledge of geometry.[2]

"The name 'arabesque', given to the conventional patterns in low relief used in England from Elizabethan days onwards, indicates that here we owe something to the Arabs of the Middle Ages."[3]

Muslim Literature

Apart from the great masterpiece the Qur'án, which inspired Dante with his *Commedia,*[4] Muslim literature comprises many great outstanding works which influenced the mind, soul and emotions of mankind. The quatrains of 'Omar Khayyam, the verses of Hafiz (lived *c.* 1320-1390 C.E. — 720-792 A.H.), of Shiraz, Iran and Firdawsi (b. 940 C.E., d. 1020 C.E.), stand at the forefront. But the most popular of all those works, in fact, the most popular work in the

1 They are squarish characters, originated in Kufa (Iraq), hence the name.
2 Martin S. Briggs, "Architecture," in *The Legacy of Islam,* Oxford, 1931, pp. 178-179.
3 Ibid., p. 176. See also M. S. Briggs, "The Nature of Saracenic Ornament." in *Muhammadan Architecture in Egypt and Palestine,* Oxford, 1924.
4 *c.f. The Divine Comedy and Islam,* by Miguel Asin Palacios, London, 1926.

whole world, is *The Arabian Nights*. Be it Indian, Persian or Arabian, it is still the work of Muslim authors. It has reached the highest flight of human imagination. It has inspired so many writers of nationalities as diverse as the Chinese and English. And it has been a source of instruction and entertainment to so many millions throughout the ages that one would not hesitate for a moment to say that it is the greatest literary work that humanity ever produced. It is even greater than Shakespeare's works put together! My contention in this case rests on two points :

(1) *Popularity*: no one can deny that the stories of *The Arabian Nights* are much more popular throughout the world than Shakespeare's plays, for the simple reason that they appeal to a wider range of people, from little children to the oldest sages.

(2) *Extent of influence and inspiration*: many more writers derived their inspiration from the Arabian writers than from Shakespeare's works.

The Arabian Nights is as mysterious as *al-Hamraa'* (Alhambra) of Granada, Spain. Just as we do not know the great architect who designed and built that magical palace, we do not know the great Muslim genius who wrote *The Arabian Nights*. It is perhaps the Muslim spirit of self-negation which made these two great men keep *incognito*.

That the work was written somewhere in the middle of the thirteenth century can be verified from the date given in one of the oldest and earliest stories in the book, " The Tailor's Tale " (Richard Burton, *The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night*). And that the author was a Baghdadi can be proved by the dialectical words, idioms and turns of phrase that are still in use in Baghdad today, and are indeed peculiar to it.

I personally advise every European to study *The Arabian Nights* if for nothing else but to see for himself the wonderful position Muslim women occupied in medieval Islam. In this connection, Burton rightly says: " The next point I propose to consider is the position of womanhood

in *The Nights,* so curiously at variance with the stock ideas concerning the Moslem home and domestic policy still prevalent, not only in England, but throughout Europe. Many readers of these volumes have remarked to me with much astonishment that they find the female characters more remarkable for decision, action and manliness than the male ; and are wonderstruck by their masterful attitude and by the supreme influence they exercise upon public and private life."[1]

" The legal status of womankind in Islam is exceptionally high, a fact of which Europe has often been assured, although the truth has not even yet penetrated into the popular brain."[2]

" The greatest of Spanish plays, *La Vida es Sueño* (Life's a Dream), is the story of Christopher Sly in *The Taming of the Shrew,* both of which are derived from " The Sleeper Wakened " in *The Thousand and One Nights.*"[3]

It was *The Arabian Nights* which gave the European, and especially the English novel, a new trend. Novels of the seventeenth century did not have much appeal to the public mind until in 1704 Galland published his translation of *The Arabian Nights,* which the English public received with unparalleled enthusiasm. To satisfy the public demand, stories in imitation of *The Thousand and One Nights* appeared.[4] In the course of the eighteenth century the book ran through at least thirty English and French editions, and has been published more than 300 times in all the European languages.[5]

Without *The Arabian Nights* there would have been no *Robinson Crusoe* and no *Gulliver's Travels.*[6]

Perhaps next to *The Arabian Nights* one can mention

1 Sir Richard Burton, *The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night,* " Terminal Essay ".
2 Ibid., p. 195.
3 J. B. Trend, " Spain and Portugal," in *The Legacy of Islam.*
4 H. A. R. Gibb, " Literature," in *The Legacy of Islam,* Oxford, 1931.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.

the *Quatrains* of 'Omar Khayyam, another great Muslim literary product, which has been translated into all European languages and is still read with great admiration, and the extent of appreciation it enjoys with the average European can be judged by the fact that its copies are often sent to friends as Christmas and birthday presents.

INFLUENCE OF ARABIC ON EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

Arabic is the official language of Islam. It is the language of the Qur'án and the Hadith. It is also the language in which all prayers are conducted ; but this does not mean that the Qur'án cannot be translated in foreign tongues.

Though in literature Arabic is the junior of Hebrew by one thousand years, yet philologically it is its senior by countless centuries. It is indispensable for the study of the Old Testament. It is also indispensable for the study of the legacy of the Middle Ages and the history of the European Renaissance.

Speaking of the genius of the Arabic language at its zenith, Professor A. Guillaume, of London University, thinks that " Aramaic was a poverty-stricken tongue compared with Arabic, and not even classical Hebrew at its best could rival Arabic in its astonishing elasticity.

" Arabic is fitted to express relations with more conciseness than the Aryan language because of the extraordinary flexibility of the verb and noun. Thus, the ideas: break, shatter, try to break, cause to break, allow to be broken, break one another, ask someone to break, pretend to break, are among many variations of the fundamental verbal theme which can, or could, be expressed by vowel changes and consonantal arguments without the aid of the supplementary verbs and pronouns which we have to employ in English."[1]

Further, Professor Guillaume goes on to account for the charm of the language of Islam by saying: " The charm

1 The Preface in *The Legacy of Islam.*

which the Arabic language and Arabic literature never fails to exert on its devotees lies in its unexpectedness, its unaffectedness, and its love of direct speech . . . examples will be found of the contributions which the Arabic tongue has made to the languages of Europe. How many words lived only for a day or were slain by the European Renaissance only specialists can say. What, for instance, have the physicians done with the *soda* which once formed the opening discourse of the third book of Avicenna's *Qanun*? . . . This barbarous transcription stands for *suda* (headache), and comes appropriately enough from the root *sada'a* (to split)."[1]

During the Muslim rule in Spain, "Latin was a clumsy language to write compared with Arabic, and the Latin literature available was of no great interest; so we find a bishop in Cordoba reprimanding his flock not so much for lack of faith as for preferring Arabic poetry and prose to the homilies of the Fathers. Again, the Muslims had introduced paper, and books were more quickly and cheaply produced in Arabic than in Latin."[2]

Many Arabic words have found their way into European languages, especially Spanish and Portuguese, and this is only to be expected since the Arabs controlled more or less the whole of Spain for nearly eight centuries. Most of the words borrowed are nouns, particularly technical, commercial and marine terms.

English and the rest of the north European languages received their share of loan words from Arabic through Spain and Portugal, and also via the Crusaders. But we must be careful in deciding whether a word has really been borrowed from Arabic or the similarity is just accidental, such as the English word "sheriff" and the seemingly similar Arabic word "sharif". There are also a host of monosyllabic words that are identical in Arabic and English. These can be explained as being either onomatopoeic, hence

1 The Preface in *The Legacy of Islam.*
2 J. B. Trend in *The Legacy of Islam,* art. Spain and Portugal.

they are international, or, according to the theory of the late Père Anstas al-Kirmili, as the Semites were living in Iraq and the Aryans in Mesopotamia, they exchanged hosts of monosyllabic words, hence one comes across such astonishingly identical words as:

Arabic	*English*
Kit	Cat
Kat	Cut
Sudd	Shuit
'Add	Add
Ba'a	Buy, etc.

There are many words in both Arabic and English that are partially identical (i.e., in one or two letters only), or they have the same rhythm or have letters that are interchangeable. I personally maintain that there is hardly a word in English that does not bear resemblance to its Arabic equivalent in one way or another.

Apart from these words, there are others that are considered by historical and philological evidence as direct borrowing, such as:

Arabic	*English*
Ta'rifa	Tariff
Tafrik	Traffic
Amir al-Bahr	Admiral
Hashshashin	Assassin
Dar al-Sina'a	Arsenal
Al-Kuhl	Alcohol
Bazz	Baize
Al-Jabur	Algebra
Tillasin	Talisman

In the Middle Ages, the Europeans were dependent on the Muslim factories in Spain, Syria and Iraq for practically everything they wore. The Arabic names of various materials, preserved in European languages to the present day, will attest to this fact.[1]

(1) *Muslin* is the mussolina imported by Italian merchants from Mosul (a town in northern Iraq).

1 A. H. Christie, "Islamic Minor Arts and their Influence upon European Work," in *The Legacy of Islam*, Oxford, 1931.

(2) *Baldacco*[1] is the rich silk fabrics brought from Baghdad.

(3) *Fustian,* the kind of cloth known in Chaucer's time, came from Fustat (Old Cairo), the Egyptian capital at the time of early Islam.

(4) Grenadines, dress fabrics from Granada.

(5) Taffeta comes from the Persian *taftah.*

(6) Taby silk (French and Italian, *tabis*) comes from the Arabic *attabi,* named after a quarter in Baghdad, al-Attabiyyah, which in its turn was named after Attab, a companion of the Prophet. It is interesting to note here that the name "tabby cat" is derived from the same source, owing to the brown and yellow *attabi* fur of the animal.[2]

(7) *Damask* comes from Damascus.

Further, it was the Arabs who introduced, among other trades, the manufacture of silk clothes into Europe. The Muslim silk factories in Sicily gave a great impetus to the industry in the whole Italian peninsula, which later became so well-famed for its silken stuffs.

Another trade the Europeans learnt from the Muslims was carpet weaving, especially pile carpets.[3]

Although paper was invented by the Chinese, the Europeans did not borrow it directly from them. They waited until the Arabs brought it along to them and taught them how to manufacture it. Again Sicily, Italy and Spain played a decisive role in this respect. The Arabs first knew of paper in 704 C.E. when they captured Samarqand. There are numerous Arabic manuscripts that date back to the ninth century, whereas Europeans cannot go further back than the twelfth or even the thirteenth century for any *MSS* written on paper.[4]

1 Corrupted form of the name "Baghdad".
2 G. le Strange, *Baghdad under the Abbasid Caliphate,* Oxford, 1900.
3 A. H. Christie, op. cit., p. 139.
4 op. cit.

CHAPTER V

MUSLIM CONCEPTS OF LAW, LIBERTY AND MORALITY

The whole Muslim social system is based on the conception that God is the only supreme judge, Who cannot be approached by intercessors, be they prophets, saints or images, except by His permission. This idea of non-interference of other beings between God and His creature is one of the strongest points of Muslim morality. Nothing can save you except your good deeds. Neither Jesus nor a cross can save you from your sins. It is only your atonement for your bad deeds by good which can provide the sure way to salvation. And as de Santillana so beautifully puts it:

" Alone and defenceless in the presence of the All-seeing Judge, what can man do in order to shelter himself from the power of God, but surrender himself to His mercy, 'from Him to Him,' according to the Muslim formula? This surrender of man to God, a surrender full of humility and hope, is true faith, and that is why Islam (i.e., the abandonment of oneself to God) is the only true religion, because it is the only disposition of a religious soul in the presence of God. Man realizes who God is and man's lowly estate in His eyes.

". . . Submission to this law is at the same time a social duty and a precept of faith ; whosoever violates it, not only infringes the legal order, but commits a sin, because there is no right in which God has not a share."[1]

Islam came as a means to soften the rigidity of Judaism and to introduce a break to the otherworldliness of Christianity, and to go back to natural law, which law, eleven hundred years later, France's great thinker and philosopher, Jean Jacques Rousseau (1778 C.E.), made the main theme of his social preaching. One wonders if he had not obtained

1 D. de Santillana, " Law and Society," in *The Legacy of Islam*, p. 287.

this through the influence of Islam, for he came into close contact with the Moors, as he mentions in his celebrated *Confessions.*

The new law proclaimed by Muhammad as Islam has made its main characteristic the understanding of the frailties of man and the necessities of life. It does not treat man merely as a soul. It does not treat him merely as a body. But it treats him as both body and soul! And therein lies the greatness of Islam which makes it a religion that satisfies the requirements of this world and the next.

In the Qur'án we read: "Upon each man only what he can fulfil" (2:286).

"Ease the way; do not make it rougher," said the Prophet Muhammad. Such is the spirit of Islam and the society upon which it is built. There may be mysticism in it but not asceticism. "*L'Islam est un religion d'hommes*" (Islam is a religion of men), says the French philosopher Ernest Renan.

The modern concept, that the fundamental essence of law is liberty, is embodied in Islam. But this liberty has its limits; it ends where public interest begins. So if anybody crosses this boundary he shall have the *hadd,* an Arabic word used in the Qur'án meaning "limit". Because he who transgresses the "limit" makes himself liable to punishment, the word by transference has come to mean "punishment".

Islamic law gives the greatest concessions to human freedom of action. One can find various shades of freedom even in things that are not exactly lawful; for apart from the domains of *Halal* (lawful) and *Haram* (unlawful), there are the "things admissible" and the "things reprehensible", called *ja'iz* and *makruh* respectively in Islamic jurisprudence.

Eleven centuries prior to Rousseau's proclamation in his *Social Contract,* "Man was born free but everywhere he is in chains," Islam had declared that Adam was God's vicegerent on earth. In fact, he was so free that he could eat from the forbidden tree. "Freedom is the inborn right of every man, slaves only being an exception to the rule: 'Adam and

Eve were free', a proposition from which jurists have drawn various inferences:

(a) the foundling whose status is undetermined is presumed to be free;

(b) the freeman claimed as a slave is not bound *prima facie* to prove his freedom until the reverse has been legally shown against him;

(c) in case of doubt, the presumption is for liberty."[1]

According to Islamic law we belong to God, who is our only Master; we have no other master but He. Therefore we are only responsible to Him. It is for us to dispose of our person by suicide, or to dispose of our own liberty by selling ourselves to slavery.

All the world's goods belong to all men. Everybody is entitled to everything until and unless such claim encroaches upon the valid claim of his fellow creatures.

There is nothing unlimited, because limitation is necessary to avoid a chaotic state. Every authority has a scope and limit — the authority of the governor over the governed; the parents over their children; the husband over the wife and the wife over her husband, etc.

The supreme head of an ideal Muslim State is the Caliph, but let it be understood that the Caliph has not, as is so often erroneously stated by Western writers, any priestly character, for Islam has no hierarchy nor apostolic succession,[2] and the Caliph is not a divinely appointed person. He has come to his exalted position upon a contract made between him (i.e., the governor) and the people governed, exactly as it is explained in Rousseau's *Social Contract*. It was on this understanding that the first four successors of the Prophet Muhammad held office. The first Muslim government was in every sense a democratic republic.

One can easily judge how broad and elastic is the Muslim conception of liberty from the fact that practically all its precepts have reasonable exceptions: now, for instance,

1 Santillana, op. cit., pp. 292-3.
2 Ibid., p. 298.

we may stop fasting if we are ill or on a journey ; we may suspend our ritual prayers and perform them at a later time in the day if there is an unavoidable cause for doing so ; we can do without pilgrimage if we are not men of means.

The greatest Muslim theologian and philosopher who studied the scope of permissibility in Islam was al-Ghazzali (d. 1111 C.E.). He discussed the subject in the following way:

" The concessions made by us are not spontaneous, but necessity makes lawful what is forbidden. We know it is not allowed to feed on a dead animal: still, it would be worse to die of hunger."

Then he passes on to the question of the Caliphate, and says: " Which is to be preferred, anarchy and the stoppage of social life for lack of a properly constituted authority, or acknowledgment of the existing power, whatever it be? Of these two alternatives, the jurist cannot but choose the latter."[1]

Western writers are agreed that Europe borrowed the principles of " equality before the Law " and " good faith " from Islam. And here is how Santillana exposes the two principles:

" 1. Equality: ' The white man is not above the black, nor the black above the yellow ; all men are equal before their Maker,' said the Prophet Muhammad. Equal before God, members of a great family in which there is neither noble nor villain, but only believers ; Muslims are equal before the civil law ; and this equality was proclaimed at a time when it was practically unknown throughout Christian society.

" 2. This law, equal for all, rests essentially on *good faith*. Muslims must keep their pledges . . . ' Be honest towards those who have confidence in your honesty ' ; ' do not betray those who have betrayed you ' . . . these traditions . . . are among the general rules of Muslim Law. This con-

1 Santillana, op. cit.

ception of good faith is essentially an ethical one, and is elevated to an abstract and universal notion. It strikes us as being more akin to our mind than the feudal and Germanic conception of good faith springing from personal fealty. The system thus allows a wide scope to the human will, and attaches importance to the spirit rather than to the letter. *Human will,* whatever its expression, is sufficient to create a legal bond. . . .

" Having as its scope social utility, Muslim Law is essentially progressive, in much the same way as our own. Being a product of language and logic it is a science. It is not unchangeable and dependent on mere tradition. The great schools of Law agree on this point. ' The legal rule,' say the Hanafites, ' is not unchangeable ; it is not the same as the rules of grammar and logic. It expresses what generally happens and changes with the circumstances which have produced it.

" Law is also liable to change with regard to its application. . . . ' Utility is the rule of the lawyer.' The Arabs have perceived very clearly the reason of this *flexibility* (italics are mine). It is again usage. Societies are living organisms and undergo ceaseless changes during their life. . . .

" We can see that the Companions of the Prophet took different decisions on the ground of their utility, without being authorized by any precept."[1]

The second Caliph, 'Umar the Great, for instance, gave two rulings in two similar cases. When he was asked of this, he said: *Thaka zamanun hakamna bikki wa hatha zamanun nahkumu bikki* (That was a time to suit which we gave a ruling ; this is another time to suit which we are giving another ruling).

" Such are the foundations of the great authority given by Muslim jurists to custom. It is a kind of unwritten rule which has the power of making law and even of modifying it."[2]

1 Santillana, op. cit.
2 Ibid.

" Not only does the law admit custom, but it follows in its changes.

" It is a general rule that every law based on use or custom changes with the custom itself. . . . To apply laws which are founded on ancient usage once that usage is changed, is to set oneself against general opinion, and to prove one's ignorance of religion. The truth is that whenever a law is based upon the custom of a particular time, that law must change when the conditions which called it into being have changed."[1]

The distinction between the *rights of God* and the *rights of man* has no more meaning than the distinction between public law and private law.

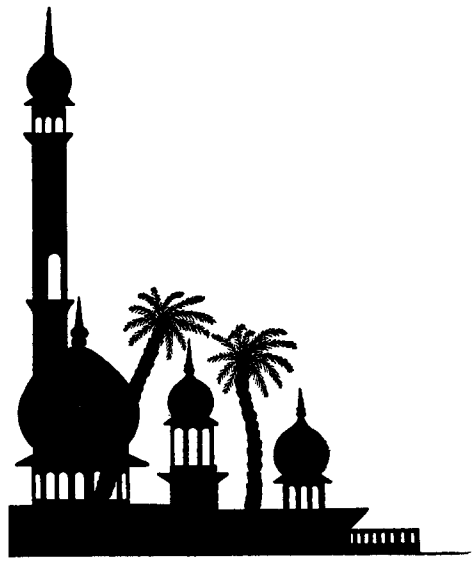
The Prophet Muhammad enjoins mutual help among Muslims, especially among neighbours. In one of his traditions he says: " Be kind to your neighbour. Draw the veil over him. Avoid injury. . . . If you see him doing evil, forgive him . . ."

Islamic law is so very reminiscent of the present-day English law and the English way of life that I sometimes wonder if it is not correct to call the English people Muslims in everything but name. Conciliation and compromise, which are so popularly known as English characteristics, seem to have been preached by Islam long before the English people were known in history. " Conciliation and compromise," says Santillana in connection with Islam, " are everywhere asserted to be most laudable. Reprisals are forbidden. 'No one may make use of his right so as to cause another an evident damage.' It is forbidden, for instance, to hire a beast of burden to a man known for his rough treatment of animals. . . . Everywhere the limit of law and its measures is traced by morality."[2]

Further, Santillana makes the following acknowledgment of European borrowing from the Muslim moral and civil law:

1 Santillana, op. cit.
2 Ibid.

" Among our positive acquisitions from Arab law, there are legal institutions such as limited partnership (*qirad*), and certain technicalities of commercial law. But even omitting these, there is no doubt that the high ethical standard of certain parts of Arab law acted favourably on the development of our modern concepts ; and herein lies its enduring merit."[1]



1 Santillana, op. cit.

CHAPTER VI

SOME FACTS ABOUT MARRIAGE IN ISLAM

There is no other religion in the world that favours women so much as Islam. It is a fact that Islam is women's religion ; but unfortunately most of the Muslims today are Muslims only in name. In actual fact they are practising a religion of their own, something peculiar to them.

In questions of marriage in particular, the greatest blunders are being made. This is partly due, no doubt, to the fact that the bulk of the Muslim women are ignorant. If they only study the privileges conferred on them by their religion and stand firmly by them they will be much happier than they are at present.

Islam, for instance, gives a woman the right to propose to a man. It is only human. A woman might fall in love with a man and she wishes to marry him. There is nothing abnormal about that. Men, unfortunately, tend to regard women as a species of animal totally different from them. They feel surprised to know that a woman has fallen desperately in love with a man and they even frown upon such a phenomenon, whereas if a man falls in love with a woman, that is regarded as quite natural. According to Islam, however, women are on an equal footing with men. Due consideration is taken of their emotions and feelings. According to the *Bukhari* (Egyptian ed., Vol. III, pp. 20-21), Khawla bint Hakim was one of those women who proposed to the Prophet. A reference to this is made in the Qur'án in ch. 23 : 50-51 : " O Prophet, surely We have made lawful to you your wives . . . and a believing woman, if she gave herself to the Prophet, if the Prophet desired to marry her. . . . The similar incidents of women proposing to the Prophet are related in the *Bukhari*."

Another thing that is quite lawful in Islam is to see the woman before the engagement. In the chapter on looking at a

woman before marriage in the *Bukhari* it is recorded that " a woman came to the Prophet and said, ' O Prophet of God, I have come to present myself to you '. So he raised his eyes and looked carefully at her. . . ."[1]

No father or relative is allowed to marry his daughter or any female relative against her own wish. If he does so, then the marriage is null. The Prophet makes it quite clear that neither a virgin nor a widow, nor a divorcee, is allowed to be married without her consent. On being asked how does a woman express her consent when a man's name is mentioned to her as a prospective husband, he said, " By maintaining silence " (the *Bukhari).*

Now, when Khansa bint Khitham al-Ansariyya was married by her father against her will, she went to the Prophet Muhammad and explained the case to him. He forthwith declared the marriage void " (the *Bukhari).*

Moreover, a father or a relative can ask someone to marry his daughter or relative. There is nothing wrong with it. It is quite in order. When Hafsa's husband died, her father, 'Omar Ibn al-Khattab, went to 'Uthman Ibn 'Affan and asked him whether he cared to marry his daughter. He replied that he would think it over. After a few days he told him that he was unable to marry owing to certain circumstances. Without feeling rebuffed 'Omar went to Abu Bakr and made the same proposal to him. The latter kept quiet, because the Prophet himself was thinking of asking for her hand. As the matter was, however, confidential, Abu Bakr kept quiet until after the marriage, when he explained to 'Omar why he had not given him a reply at the time (the *Bukhari).*

As for the dowry, which is such a great obstacle to marriage in many Muslim countries today, it seems to me of no consequence at all. We are told that a man offered a few chapters of the Qur'án as a dowry. He did not even possess an iron ring to offer his bride (*cf.* the *Bukhari).*

1 See " Bab al-Nadhar ila al-Mar'ah qabl al-Tazwij " (the *Bukhari,* Egyptian edition, VII, p. 25).

CHAPTER VII

GRANDEUR OF MOORISH CIVILIZATION IN SPAIN

If Islam had no other achievement to its credit but the great civilization of Spain, it has every right to be proud, and indeed its adherents have every right to claim that it is a religion of truth, integrity and power. For you cannot build such a great monument with a false spiritual backing. Spain like the rest of Europe before the advent of Islam was in a miserable state. It reverted to its former chaotic condition and sank into a state of insignificance after the complete expulsion of the Muslims in 1603 C.E.

Though many edifices of the Moors in Spain were demolished simply because they were built by the Arabs or because they were war booty, the remaining few are enough to do justice to the greatness of Islam in Spain.

It will take us beyond the scope of this book if we try to mention all the Eastern and Western admirers of these relics. But suffice it to say that since the downfall of the kingdom of Granada in 1492 C.E. up to the present day there have been hordes of visitors to that forlorn land of Islam. A goodly number of them have recorded their sentiments in elegant verse and quaint prose. Many of them spent several years on end drawing the details of the mosque in Cordova and the palace in Granada.

Many Christians were genuinely sorry for the fall of that civilization under the barbarous hammerings of bigoted Catholics. Even at the present day a conscientious Christian writes in the following vein:

"Oh! miserable bells, symbols of so much! Heralds of the darkness when Catholicism with its horde of bigoted priests fell like a pack of wolves upon the fair form of

science, her temple desecrated, her votaries destroyed. O! pitiful hour, recalling the more ancient savagery of Judea exemplified in those words, 'Happy is he who dasheth thy little ones against the stones'.

"The simplicity and purity have fled; where a mosque arose now stands the cathedral, where Islam reigned now Jesuits rule. The past remains in the *patio* alone; one imagines the mosque with the sunlight pouring through the open arches upon the white-robed devotees engaged in their prayers, with that close communion, that real absorption on the infinite, the Cause, God the One, Mighty, Merciful and Compassionate. How exquisite a vision! How different a scene from that which I have just beheld in the dim light of the cathedral where black-clothed worshippers knelt before the altars of saints and images, praying to others than God.

"Do I hear the midday call to prayer? No, for on looking up into the minaret I behold two Spanish army caps; it is but the soldier's voices I hear — and what my thoughts and imagination had evoked is swiftly and rudely shattered.

"Oh! how are the mighty fallen, and all their works brought to naught! Yet, though I know these soldiers are above me, that within the massive walls of the cathedral Christians are praying to their various gods, there is still a haunting charm, a whisper of souls long forgotten, and of another creed, who forever hover near. They permeate this silent courtyard with their shadowy forms and quiet faith, and still remain unseen owners of this *patio*.

"There are corners in the world which continue to hold through the ages certain characteristics of individuals or of races, however immaterial, that conquer time, and which are, as far as humanity can be, eternal. And in this '*Patio de los Naranjos*', under the shadow of the Giralda, I found the spirit of *Ya'qub al-Mansur* and his co-religionists still enduring and predominating through the intervening

centuries, still enveloping this place with that sense of surety and peace which pervades the sanctuaries of Islam."[1]

"Cordova in the tenth century was the most civilized city in Europe, the wonder and admiration of the world, a Vienna among Balkan states. Travellers from the north heard with something like fear of the city which contained 70 libraries and 900 public baths; yet whenever the rulers of Leon, Navarre or Barcelona needed such things as a surgeon, an architect, a dressmaker or a singing master, it was to Cordova that they applied.[2]

"It was Cordova that made the famous 'Moorish Arch' known to the Christians and Muslims alike and made the most original contribution to architecture: the system of vaulting based on intersecting arches and visible intersecting ribs."[3]

I would like my readers to know something of the grandeur of a town built by Muslims in Spain. The name of this city was *Madinat al-Zahra,* or the "City of Splendour". It might be regarded as a poetic flight of imagination if I said that I do not think there was or there will be a city as beautiful as *al-Zahra*[4] (The Resplendent). The descriptions left to us by historians show that it was far more beautiful than al-Hamra (Alhambra) of Granada itself — its like will never be seen again! This is no exaggeration at all. Has the modern world, in spite of its great scientific power and atomic energy, been able to build another Alhambra? People who know the modern skyscrapers and see the other wonders of the world look at the Alhambra with wonderment and admiration.

If this be Alhambra, what must al-Zahra have been like? It must have been a magic city that was conjured up

1 R. Gordon-Canning, "The Giralda, the Reverie of a Non-Muslim Friend of Islam," *The Islamic Review* for December, 1949, pp. 26-27.
2 J. B. Trend, "Spain and Portugal," *The Legacy of Islam,* Oxford, 1931, p. 9.
3 Ibid., p. 12.
4 The name of a city near the modern Cordova, Spain.

by magic and vanished by magic — a city in *The Arabian Nights*!

How did this mysterious city come into existence? The story is told in brief as follows:

After the death of Prince 'Abdullah Ibn Muhammad, the Umayyad, his illustrious grandson, 'Abd al-Rahman III (912-961 C.E.) was raised to the throne of Cordova. A quarter of a century after his rise to power, 'Abd al-Rahman thought of building the city of al-Zahra, to be named after his favourite queen. The site was chosen in one of the suburbs of Cordova which is under the mountain of *al-'Arus* (the Bride). The river Guadalquivir formed a link with Cordova. Later, al-Zahra expanded so much towards the capital that in the end the two cities seemed one.

A man leaving Cordova through the northern gate and following the embankment of the Guadalquivir through forests and luxuriant flower gardens, for an hour or so, will in the end find himself face to face with a huge gate exquisitely decorated ; it is the door of the city of al-Zahra. On both sides of the magnificent door were ramparts encircling the city, consisting of three hundred military towers. Entering the city through this door, one finds oneself amidst beautiful parks and spacious squares until one reaches " Bab al-Aqba " (*The Door of Vaults*), which is the first gate of the palace, followed by " Bab al-Saddat al-a'zam " (*The Greatest Gate of the Dam*). Al-Sath al-Mumarrad is in front of all the gardens, overlooking al-Rawdha (*The Courtyard*). On the southern side are the Gilded Halls (*al-Abha al-Mudhahhabah*). On their right and left flanks are the *Fuslan* followed by al-Majlisan (*The Two Assembly Halls*), east and west. The Gilded Halls consisted of innumerable halls and their ramifications. They presented a variety of decorations distinguishing clearly one hall from another. Each of these halls was suitable for the imperial throne. At times it was placed in al-Bahw al-awsat (*The Middle Hall*) of al-Abha al-Qibliyya al-Mudhahhaba (*The Southern Gilded Halls*). When al-Hakam al-Mustansir was

proclaimed Caliph in 796 C.E. it was transferred to al-Majlis al-sharqi (*The Eastern Assembly*), known as al-Mu'nis (*The Entertaining*). In the middle of it was the green decorated pool which was gilded and contained decorations, statuettes and human images imported from Constantinople. Around it were installed twelve statues of red gold studded with valuable pearls made in Dar al-Sina'ah (*The House of Crafts*) of Cordova. These statues represented a lion next to a gazelle and a crocodile, all of which were facing a serpent, an eagle and an elephant. On the other two sides were a dove, a hawk, a peacock, a hen, a cock, a kite and an eagle, all being of gold studded with jewels, ejecting water from their mouths. In al-Zahra was the palace of the Caliphate. Its bricks were of gold and silver. In the middle was a pool full of quicksilver. On each side of it were eight gates of teak and ebony, studded with gold and jewels. The sun entered through the door and struck the quicksilver pool, the gold and silver walls, thus creating a very strong light that dazzled the eyes.

The palace of the Caliphate had a large mosque consisting of five wondrous halls, with an exquisite pulpit, around which was a marvellous Maqsura (*Niche*) for the Caliph.[1] The library was one of the largest in the world. In this same al-Zahra was the grand lake containing varieties of fish, a large zoo for wild animals, and a garden for all varieties of birds.

Apart from these places of entertainment, there were in al-Zahra many factories for making weapons, ornaments and statues.

Al-Nasir set his son al-Hakam in charge of the building, which lasted twenty-five years, in the Caliphate of al-Nasir, and fifteen years in the Caliphate of his son al-Hakam.

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1 In a mosque, in principle, there are no specially reserved places for notables. He who comes first gets the best place available. But owing to political reasons, one of which was that the Caliph was pestered and surrounded by everybody and anybody, a place was set apart for him so that he could say his prayers in peace and comfort.

Al-Zahra remained the wonder of the world until the time of Hisham al-Mu'ayyad, the grandson of al-Nasir, when the people revolted against him, looting the palaces and demolishing the buildings. Its inhabitants, fearing the consequences, deserted the city. Later the Berbers and after them the Spaniards completed the destruction of this most beautiful city in the world. Thus within fifty years of its completion it was in ruins. Today, there remains nothing of it but some insignificant foundations of a bathroom and a pond with beautifully coloured stones scattered here and there.

During its heyday, this summer palace chiefly struck the imagination of travellers. Even in the sober pages of the historian al-Maqqari (d. 1632 C.E.), writing long afterwards, this marvellous city seems more like a dream palace of *The Thousand and One Nights* than a group of buildings.[1]

One cannot think of Andalusia[2] without thinking of the exalted status of the Andalusian women and the fine system of education offered to them.

The educational system of Andalusia provided ample opportunities for female education, and several ladies of high repute are said to have kept schools, not for tiny toddlers but for elder pupils who pursued higher branches of learning. It is interesting to note that some of the girl students were often given as difficult a test as were the boys, were examined orally on *extempore* versification, and appear to have given general satisfaction.

The brightest jewel of this distinguished company was Walladah, a princess in mind as well as in lineage, the daughter of al-Mustakfi, once the Caliph of Cordova, a lady of remarkable literary talents and social graces who will live eternally in the undying verses of her admirer, Ibn Zaidun (d. 1071 C.E.). In Maqqari's words: "... She was the

1 R. Velásquez Bosco, *Medina Azzahra y Alamiriya* (Madrid, 1912), cited by J. B. Trend in his article "Spain and Portugal" in *The Legacy of Islam*, Oxford, 1931.

2 *c.f.* 'Abdul Ghaffar, "Women in Islam," in *The Islamic Review* for January, 1939.

resplendent sun of wit and poetry whose rays illuminated every nook and corner. Her assembly was the resort of scholars and humorists of Cordova and of other towns . . ." Then there was the noble pair of sisters, the daughters of Ziyad, the bookseller, both excellent poetesses, thoroughly versed in all the branches of science and learning. Their love of learning brought them into the company of scholars with whom they mixed on perfect terms of equality, with great composure and dignity, and nobody could accuse them of forgetting the rules of their sex.

Rumaikiyyah, the wife of the ill-fated 'Abbasid Prince al-Mu'tamid . . . first attracted the attention of her royal spouse by her prompt skill and originality in capping a verse. Her witticisms, graceful play upon words and poetry, adorn the pages of many a chronicle of Muslim Spain. Her daughter Thubaniyyah was also a poetess of a high order, and her lines to her parents in exile, asking for their consent to her marriage with a merchant, were still remembered with a melancholy interest in the days of al-Maqqari.

Indeed, the poetical talent was so widespread and came so naturally to the Arab that poetry was used as frequently as prose in everyday life, and poetesses indulged in this literary pastime by composing private letters, formal epistles, often hurried notes, petitions and memorials in poetry.

The above-mentioned were the most dazzling stars, but there were a host of lesser luminaries who, though paling into comparative insignificance, would nevertheless have been an embellishment to any age or any clime. There was 'A'isha of Cordova, whose orations and poems were frequently read in the Royal Academy ; al-Ghassaniyya, who wrote eulogies in praise of the Caliph, and Maria, who was honoured with the title of " Arabian Corinna ".

There were equally renowned figures among scholars and preceptors and there were women scholars at whose feet even great savants were proud to sit. A slave-girl of Abul Mutri, who was styled al-'Arudhiyya, or *The Metrist,* studied syntax and philology from her master and ultimately

excelled him in scholarship. Abu Dawud Sulayman Ibn Najah writes that he studied prosody and literature under her. Hafsa bint al-Hajj al-Rakuniyya,[1] a blue-stocking of Granada and a pen-friend of the Vizier, Abu Bakr Ibn Yahya, was a famous preceptor of her age and was employed in educating the ladies of the harem in the days of al-Mansur. Mariam bint Abu Ya'qub al-Ansari, of Seville, was a famous poetess and an outstanding literary figure of her age. She used to deliver lectures on literature to female students.

Several women were distinguished for their high attainments in science and philosophy, and at the top stands Labena, of Cordova, well-versed in poetry, philosophy and arithmetic, who was entrusted with the highly honourable post of private secretary to the Caliph al-Hakam.

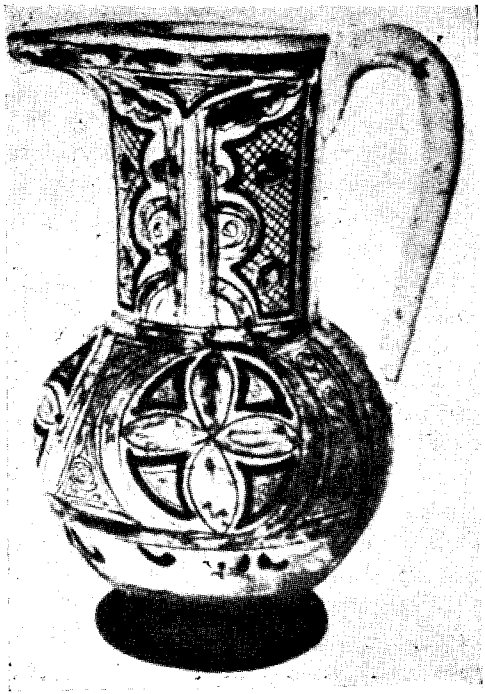
Others were equally notable in Muslim jurisprudence and law. It is said that the wife of the judge of Losha had surpassed him in the knowledge of the intricacies of law. She sat in the courtroom and the judge often consulted her on the disputed points. When a friend railed him for seeking the advice of his wife, she sent him a crushing reply in verse.

Music was the favourite pastime of the Spanish Moors, and the ripples of the Guadalquivir danced as merrily to the tunes of the *canon* and the *rabab* as the banks of the Tigris were flooded every night with sweet harmony during the reign of the good Harun al-Rashid (809 C.E.). From there, the influence of Muslim music pervaded Europe, toning down the barbarous ferocity of the war dances of the Teutons and the crude music of the primitive races.

It would be unpardonable to ignore the marvellous development of the art of medicine and surgery of Andalusia, nay, that of Western Europe — and the womanhood of Spain contributed distinguished names to this important branch of philanthropic learning. Umm al-Hasan, daughter of Qadhi Abu Ja'far Tanjali, had received regular medical education and was acquainted with the aims and objectives of the science and the causes and the predisposing

1 Concerning her, see L. Di Giacomo, *Hafsa bint al-Hajj*, 1950.

conditions of the various maladies. The Christians never knew that (when they expelled the Arabs from Spain) they were sending out along with the last Moor all culture, learning and enlightenment.



A Mudejar jar of the 14th century made in Paterno, Sicily.

CHAPTER VIII

MUSLIM DOMINATION OF SICILY AND SOUTHERN ITALY

Musa Ibn Nusair, the joint conqueror of Spain, was one of the first Muslims who thought of using Sicily as a springboard for the conquest of Italy and Central Europe, since the assault from Eastern Europe via Constantinople had failed. Consequently, he sent a reconnaissance fleet which, however, returned after plundering the coasts,[1] to report the difficulty of the enterprise and the advisability of attacking Europe via Spain. Several raids followed, but nothing serious took place until the rise of the Aghlabite Kings of Qairawan (Tunisia) in 800 C.E.

The Aghlabites thought it expedient to conquer Sicily for many reasons, foremost among which was to put an end to Byzantine piracy, which had established its headquarters in Sicily, and at the same time to extirpate internal disorders by directing the attention of the people to outside conquests. The project was not as easy as it might have seemed. It took the Aghlabites a long time and cost them many sacrifices before they could establish themselves on this strategic island. Just as the conquest of Spain threw many Muslim heroes to the forefront, so did the conquest of Sicily. Of these Asad Ibn al-Furat may well be quoted as one of the greatest. He led the first serious attack. His fleet consisted of 100 ships manned with 10,000 sailors. The great learned admiral sailed

1 Ahmad Tawfiq al-Madani, *al-Muslimun fi Jazirat Siqilliyyah* (The Arab Press, Algiers, 1365/1946). Musa Ibn Nusair wisely established in Tunis a Dar Sina'ah (*Darsenal* [Anglicised form of this word is *arsenal*]) for the building of ships which provided him with 100 ships which he put in charge of his son, 'Abdullah, but the comparatively long distance between Tunisia and Sicily was one of the discouraging factors in contemplating a second attempt.

with his fleet from Susa, Tunisia, on Sunday 11th June 824 C.E., reached Sicily in three days and anchored at Mezzara, thus covering 300 kilometres.

An army of 100,000 Byzantines met the Muslims. A fierce battle ensued, in which the Byzantines were routed. The remnants of the defeated army took refuge at Syracuse. Asad, however, followed his victory by further victories until he conquered the whole of Southern Sicily in a very short time, halting only outside the walls of Syracuse, thus covering 200 kilometres, which is the distance between Mezzara and Syracuse. Shortly afterwards, Asad, under the strain of thirteen months' exhaustion, died at the ripe age of seventy. In order to dispel all hope of returning to North Africa, his successor, Muhammad Ibn Abi al-Jawari, had the whole fleet burnt, thus following the example of Tariq Ibn Ziyyad, the Conqueror of Spain. Further reinforcements came from Muslim Spain. It consisted of a fleet of 300 ships under Admiral Farghalush. The joint Andalusian-Aghlabite force now managed to conquer Mina and Girgenti ; and laid siege to Gastro Giovamni.

Unfortunately for the Muslims, a plague broke out. As a result both the Andalusian and Aghlabite Commanders died, and a fair number of the besieging army succumbed to the pestilence. The Spanish Muslims, consequently, had to go home.

Later on, Ziyadat Allah, the Prince of Qairawan, Tunisia, had to send 30,000 fresh reinforcements under the command of Zuhair Ibn 'Awf, who must be truly styled the Conqueror of Palermo, the capital of Sicily. Having accomplished this great conquest, Ibn 'Awf decided to make Palermo his capital. Almost simultaneously with the fall of Palermo, Messina, another important town, fell to the mighty clutches of the Muslims.

Soon Palermo was filled with mosques, libraries, markets, parks and baths, which latter were unknown to medieval

Europe and were avoided by them, as they were considered a purely Islamic institution and branded as a heathen rite!

Palermo remains to this day one of the most attractive cities of the Mediterranean. The ancient quarter is still known as *la cala* (Arabic *al-Qal'a* [the citadel]), which is close to an ancient Arabic palace known as Castellammare (Arabic, *Qasr al-'Imara).* Nothing remains of the early Muslim architecture in Palermo. Quite a few Muslim monuments erected at the time of the Normans are still extant. Many quarters of this ancient town are reminiscent, in characteristics and appearance, of those of North African cities. There is to this day a quarter called *Attarini* (Arabic, *'Attarin,* druggists). No doubt this was the quarter of medieval Muslim druggists.

Of the most important monuments in this city, Qasr al-Fawwara (the Palace of the Fountain) occupies the first place. Built in 997-1019 C.E. by Prince Ja'far (one of the kings of Banu al-Hasan who ruled Sicily), this palace became the chief royal palace on the island. Later, it passed into the hands of the Normans. One can still see the ruins of this palace, together with a small church and apartments built by Arab architects for King Richard. Originally this beautiful palace was surrounded by an artificial lake, thus making it appear as though it were built on a little island.

Next to Qasr al-Fawwara, one may mention Qasr al-'Aziz, the Palace of the Mighty. The name was corrupted by the Italians into *la ziza.* Built by King William I in 1154-1166 C.E., this palace is better preserved than Qasr al-Fawwara. The chief characteristics of this palace are the attractive arches, decorations, Kufic writings on a geometrical pattern and brooks feeding a fountain in the middle of the great hall. The ensuing water forms a beautiful flood that disappears under the doors of the hall.

No less beautiful than Qasr al-'Aziz are Qasr al-Qubba (the Palace of the Dome), so-called on account of the beautiful marble dome of its principal hall, and the Royal Palace built by the Muslims before the Norman conquest.

CHAPTER IX

ISLAM IN THE WORLD

ISLAM IN EUROPE TODAY

Islam has found a fertile soil throughout the five continents. There are Muslims even in China and Japan. In China they number about fifty million, and every Chinese name that begins with Mao is a Muslim name, Mao being the Chinese version of Muhammad. In Russia there are no less than thirty million Muslims. Coming to other European countries, the largest Muslim community exists in Jugoslavia, next comes Albania, Bulgaria, Roumania, Poland and Finland respectively. Those Muslim minorities are not all the remnants of the Turks who settled there during the heyday of the Ottomans, but many of them are the descendants of Europeans who embraced Islam after they came in contact with the Ottoman Turks. There is practically no country in Europe that did not come in touch with the Muslims, whether Arabs or Turks, during the Middle Ages, be it as a result of invasion, trade or diplomatic embassies.

The Europeans first came in touch with Islam through the Arabs who conquered Spain and made it the sparkling jewel of Europe and the world. They also invaded Southern France, reaching a distance of sixty miles from Paris. There was a time when the Mediterranean was a Muslim lake. All the islands therein were under Arab domination : the Balearic islands, Sardinia, Sicily, Malta and Cyprus. In Italy they occupied the southern part and made Rome their vassal city, the Pope becoming their tributary. Arabs also occupied certain parts of Switzerland for varying lengths of time.

After them, the Ottoman Turks managed to sweep practically over the whole of Eastern and Central Europe, reaching the gates of Vienna.

Muslim traders reached as far north as Finland and Norway. Arab coins with the inscription *La ilaha illa 'l-Lah* (There is only one God) have been discovered in those parts of the world.

As a result of both conquest and trade we find today Muslims in the U.S.S.R. scattered over a wide belt of land extending " from Azerbaijan to the northern part of European Russia, and from the mouth of the Volga to the frontier of Chinese Turkestan. . . . The majority of Russian Muslims are of Turkish origin — approximately nine-tenths. . . . The non-Turkish element is . . . composed of several dozens of peoples and tribes speaking different languages and dialects. . . . Relations between Russia and the Muslim peoples date from the end of the eighth century. . . . The central portion of the Volga basin . . . constituted the greatest centre of Islamic culture in Eastern Europe.

" There are six Federated Muslim Republics in the Union : Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kirghizia. Besides these, there are seven autonomous republics, which form part of one of the Federated Republics. These are: Tartary, Bachkiry, Daghistan, Kabada-Balkary, Abkashy, Adjary and Kara-Kalpaky."[1]

ISLAM IN JUGOSLAVIA

In Jugoslavia, there are about one million and a half Muslims. They are mostly in Bosnia and Herzegovina. " They are of Slav descent and belong to the Hanafite School. . . . After the establishment of the Croatian State during the time of the Occupation, 1941-45, Islam was considered *de jure* the second State religion, Catholicism being the premier. . . . In 1945 Bosnia and Herzegovina received a federal position within the new Jugoslavia, through which an old political demand of the Muslims was fulfilled. . . . Two-thirds of the Muslim population are farmers. In towns, however, the

1 A. Bohdanowicz in an article, " Russia and her Muslim Minorities," in *The Islamic Review*, Woking, for February 1949.

Muslims are always in an absolute or negative majority, thereby giving the towns an Oriental character.

"Numerous professors of the Belgrade and Zagreb Universities, including medical and sylvi-cultural faculties in Serajevo, are Muslims from Bosnia. One Muslim, Hamdija Kresevljakovic, is member-in-ordinary to the Croatian Academy of Science and Arts. . . . On the whole, the Bosnian and Herzegovinan Muslims are good-natured and not critical. During the course of more recent history, they were often very misused and betrayed for just these two reasons."[1]

"As is known, the Bosnian-Herzegovinan Muslims belong to the Dinaric group of Jugoslavs, are mostly tall, and in Bosnia the majority of them are of very light complexion. As all Dinaric people, they have very strong feelings, which are characteristic of them, and which are regulated by their patriarchal way of life. . . . During the time of the Hajj preparations, small groups of Arabs come into the country as eventual agents for the pilgrimage to the holy cities.

"The Bosnian-Herzegovinan Islam originates from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when the politically hard-pressed Bosnian people showed sympathy with the Turks, who pressed on Central Europe, and consequently entered the fold of Islam in masses. Because in Bosnia Islam was accepted by conviction, the Bosnians soon became ardent fighters for the cause of Islam."[2]

ISLAM IN POLAND[3]

The settlement of Tartars in Palamates, in the north-east of Poland, opens a new and original phase in the history of Poland.

These Tartars are the descendants of the old Turco-Mongols who so often plundered Poland in the latter part of

1 Dr. I. Balic in an article, "Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina," in *The Islamic Review* for February 1949.
2 Ibid., p. 45.
3 This account is an extract from a series of articles by A. Bohdanovic in *The Islamic Review*, Woking, for March, April and May, 1935.

the Middle Ages, coming as far as the walls of Kracow in 1241.

Chroniclers tell us that, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, these Tartars enjoyed full rights and had privileges which even nowadays seem exorbitant. To our knowledge, no other Muslim community enjoyed such favours in any Christian country during this period.

This tribe, which has never been large, now comprises about 15,000 souls. They are usually called " Lithuanian ", because they established themselves in the great country that Lithuania was in the fourteenth century, a country stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea, and as far as the Oka in the East.

In 1350-1351 C.E. the Tartars took part in the war against Poland, on the side of the Lithuanians as in 1370 in the war against the Crusaders.

As the Tartar emigrants on their arrival in Lithuania had hardly any women with them, Witold and his successors granted them the right to marry Christian women without changing their religion.

Therefore the Lithuanian Tartars are the descendants of the representatives of several tribes of the Golden Horde who immigrated into Lithuania, and, besides, they have intermarried with Lithuanians and Poles.

ISLAM IN BULGARIA

There are in all about 800,000 Muslims in Bulgaria. The towns Phillipolis, Shumla, Rouschouk and the seaports of Wazna and Burgaz are strongly representative of the Muslim community. Their principal industry is the cultivation and production of Bulgaria's famous and excellent tobacco.[1]

1 M. Wali Khan, in an article " Muslims in Bulgaria," in *The Islamic Review* for February 1938.

To prevent outrageous massacres *en masse* of Muslims in Roumania, the Ottoman Government poured into the disturbed zones a portion of her sturdy Anatolian population. These imported Anatolians were the forefathers of the Muslims of this country. Their patient labour and industry turned the rugged landscape into a happy valley. The two main Muslim districts are those of Dobraja and Silistria.

In the capital there are nearly a thousand Muslims — Turks, Persians, Kurds and Albanians. There is a beautiful tiny mosque situated on the lake in the middle of King Carol Park.[1]

ISLAM IN FINLAND

The Muslims in Finland have two official places, one in Helsinki, the other in Tampere. Besides these, there are two unofficial places, one in Torku and the other in Bronpeh. Some families live in different villages, separated from each other and engaged in business. All these gather together on special occasions like the 'Ids (the Muslim Festivals) and the Friday congregational prayers, and also on such occasions as the solemnizing of marriages and theatrical performances, etc.

It is natural enough that in ordinary world affairs they should use the language of the country and their children should learn through the medium of this language. It is not possible for them, living as they are in this country, to do without it, but in their homes they speak their mother tongue, which is Northern Tartar Turkish. It is also natural that in their religious places of worship and in their mosques they worship God and pray to him in the Arabic language of the Qur'án. They sound the Call to Prayers (*Azan*) in Arabic.

Amongst them there are learned men who teach Arabic in a measure that is necessary for worship and the reading of

1 M. Wali Khan in an article, "Muslims in Roumania," in *The Islamic Review* for June 1937.

the Qur'án. Also there are men and women who know the Qur'án by heart — for instance Wali Ahmad Hakim, the Imam in Helsinki for the last thirty years, a very learned man, knows the Qur'án by heart. He is also a great calligraphist. In Torku, Imam Sami' Allah also is a learned man.

The learned Finnish Muslims do not allow in their religious books, especially in the writing of the Qur'án, the use of Roman letters, as is customary in Turkey today. The Muslims of Finland emphatically support the view that the unity of Islam cannot be completed without a knowledge of the Arabic language.[1]

ISLAM IN CHINA

Islam was introduced into China in the seventh century by Arabs who came by sea to Canton and Hangchow, and by people who came from the Muslim world by land through Iran and Turkestan.

With the Tang Dynasty (618-907 C.E.) we come to have historical records dealing with Muslims. About 650 C.E., the Chinese emperor sent an embassy to Caliph 'Uthman (d. 656 C.E.), who, in his turn, sent an official reply. In the next century, however, the Chinese were to know the taste of Muslim power when Hsuan Tsung (713-756 C.E.), the then Emperor, sent an army of about 200,000 men under the command of his nephew to fight General Qutaiba Ibn Muslim, only to sustain defeat and turn back. Later Qutaiba himself sent an embassy asking the Emperor either to accept Islam or pay *jizya* — the poll-tax in lieu of military service. But for the death of the Caliph Walid Ibn 'Abd al-Malik in 719 C.E. and the subsequent assassination of Qutaiba Ibn Muslim, perhaps China would have become part of the Muslim world.

1 Habib al-Rahman Shakir in an article, "Muslims in Finland," in *The Islamic Review* for August 1949.

As a result of contact with the Muslims, however, many people accepted Islam, among them a tribe called Hui Chi'i, after whom the Muslims of China were known until the Yuan (Mongol) dynasty, when it was changed to Hui-Hui, by which name they are still known.

During the Abbasid Caliphate (754-861 C.E.) several embassies came to China. About this time an event took place which did more than anything else to spread Islam in China. During the reign of the tenth T'ang Emperor Hsuan Tsung, a rebellion was organized by a General An Iu-Shan in 755 C.E. The Emperor abdicated in favour of his son, Su Tsung, who appealed to the Muslims. The Caliph Abu Ja'far sent a well-equipped and most modern army of about four to ten thousand soldiers to help Su Tsung. The rebels were defeated. To show his gratitude, the new Emperor treated the Muslim soldiers like guests and provided them with all the amenities of life. These soldiers never returned to Khorasan, but, settling down in China, married Chinese women and formed the nucleus of naturalized Chinese Muslims of today.

"About the middle of the tenth century Muslim ships had already reached the Chinese town of Canton. There was then a considerable Islamic colony in that town, which had become an emporium of the trade with China. From here some Muslim traders and sailors went even further north, and it is probable that they knew Korea and Japan."[1]

During the Yuan (Mongol) Dynasty (1260-1368 C.E.) the number of Muslims was considerable, and a Muslim named Hasan was raised to the office of Minister. Muslim arts and crafts influenced China at this time, and a great number of Islamic artistic *motifs* are seen in the famous Ming porcelain. A good deal of porcelain belonging to this period bears Arabic words and inscriptions, and verses from the Holy Qur'án.[2]

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1 From an article in *The Islamic Review* for March 1949.
2 *The Islamic Review* for March 1949.

Apart from these Muslims who came by the overland route, there were many who came by sea and settled down in Canton and Hangchow. These Muslims spread Islam in the South, as the others had done in the North and North-West.[1]

1 J. K. Kramers in an article, "Geography and Commerce," in *The Legacy of Islam*, London, p. 95 top. Arab geographers called Japan the Islands of Waq Waq. *ibid.*, pp. 95-6.

(There is but one God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God)

PART II

ISLAM OUR CHOICE

La Ilaha illa 'l-Lah; Muhammad Rasul Allah (There is but one God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God) constitutes what is known as the formula of faith of a Muslim. It is by accepting the twofold truth contained in the sentence that one joins the Brotherhood of Islam. The first part emphasizes the unity of God whereas the second is a constant reminder to a Muslim that even though a great benefactor of mankind, Muhammad, is still a Messenger and that he should never be raised to the pedestal of the Great Unseen Being — God.

By accepting the oneness of God a Muslim also accepts as a corollary the oneness of mankind.

Al-Hajj Lord Headley al-Farooq (d. 1935) (England).

" It is possible some of my friends may imagine that I have been influenced by Mahomedans ; but this is not the case, for my present convictions are solely the outcome of many years of thought. My actual conversations with educated Muslims on the subject of religion only commenced a few weeks ago, and need I say that I am overjoyed to find that all my theories and conclusions are entirely in accord with Islam? Even my friend Khwaja Kamal-al-Din has never tried to influence me in the slightest degree. He has been a veritable living concordance, and has patiently explained and translated portions of the Koran which did not appear quite clear to me, and in this respect he showed the true spirit of the Muslim Missionary, which is never to force or even persuade. Conversion, according to the Koran, should come out of free choice and spontaneous judgement, and never be attained by means of compulsion. Jesus meant the same thing when he said to his disciples, ' And whosoever shall not receive you nor hear you, when ye depart there . . . ' (St. Mark, vi, ii).

" I have known very many instances of zealous Protestants who have thought it their duty to visit Roman Catholic homes in order to make ' converts ' of the inmates. Such irritating and unneighbourly conduct is, of course, very obnoxious, and has invariably led to much ill-feeling — stirring up strife and tending to bring religion into contempt. I am sorry to think that Christian missionaries have also tried these methods with their Muslim brethren, though why they should try to convert those who are already better Christians than they are themselves, I am at a loss to conceive. I say ' better

Christians' advisedly, because the charity, tolerance and broad-mindedness in the Muslim faith come nearer to what Christ himself taught than do the somewhat narrow tenets of the various Christian Churches.

"To take one example — the Athanasian Creed, which treats the Trinity in a very confusing manner. In this Creed, which is very important and deals conclusively with one of the fundamental tenets of the 'Churches', it is laid down most clearly that it represents the Catholic faith, and that if we do not believe it we shall perish everlastingly. Then we are told that we *must think of the Trinity* if we want to be saved — in other words that a God we in one breath hail as Merciful and Almighty in the next breath we accuse of injustice and cruelty which we would attribute to the most bloodthirsty human tyrant. As if God, Who is before all and above all, would be in any way influenced by what a poor mortal 'thinks of the Trinity'.

"Here is another instance of want of charity. I received a letter — it was of my leaning towards Islam — in which the writer told me that if I did not believe in the Divinity of Christ *I could not be saved.* The question of the Divinity of Christ never seemed to me nearly so important as that other question, 'Did he give God's messages to mankind?' Now if I had any doubt about this latter point it would worry me a great deal, but, thank God, I have no doubts, and I hope that my faith in Christ and his inspired teachings is as firm as that of any other Muslim or Christian. As I have often said before, Islam and Christianity *as taught by Christ himself* are sister religions, only held apart by dogmas and technicalities which might very well be dispensed with.

"In the present day men are prone to become atheists when asked to subscribe to dogmatic and intolerant beliefs, and there is doubtless a craving for a religion appealing to the intelligence as well as to the sentiments. Whoever heard of a Muslim turning atheist? There may have been cases, but I very much doubt it.

"There are thousands of men — and women, too, I believe — who are at heart Muslims, but convention, fear of adverse comments, and desire to avoid any worry or change, conspire to keep them from openly admitting the fact. I have taken the step, though I am quite aware that many friends and relatives now look upon me as a lost soul and past praying for. And yet I am just the same in my beliefs as I was twenty years ago; it is the outspoken utterance which has lost me their good opinion.

"Having briefly given some of the reasons for adopting the teachings of Islam, and having explained that I consider myself by that very act a far better Christian than I was before, I can only hope that others will follow the example — which I honestly believe

is a good one — which will bring happiness to anyone looking upon the step as one in advance rather than one in any way hostile to true Christianity." *(A Western Awakening to Islam,* pp. 11, 12, 13.)

Glory be to God, and Praise be unto Him ; Glory be to God, the Great

Marmaduke Pickthall (England).

Marmaduke Pickthall was born in 1875; educated at Harrow; and at the impressionable age when most young men are contemplating a University career, was already in Palestine, laying, as it were, the foundations of that intimate understanding of the Near East and its conditions — religious, political, social and economic — which has made him, perhaps, the foremost English authority on the subject.

As a novelist he sprang to fame with the publication in 1903 of *Said the Fisherman,* a Syrian romance which stamped its author as a literary individualist and a seeing observer. He wrote numerous other novels.

Pickthall declared his faith in Islam in 1918, and took a prominent part in Muslim activity in England. In 1919 Mr. Pickthall conducted the Friday prayers and delivered the sermons at the London Prayer House of the Woking Muslim Mission; led the 'Id prayers and delivered the sermon; and during the month of Ramadhan in 1919 conducted the *Traveeh* prayers at the London Prayer House, while throughout the whole period he was largely responsible for the editing of *The Islamic Review.*

Later he went to Hyderabad (Deccan), India, and translated the Holy Qur'án under the title of *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran.*

H. M. Leon (England).

" One of the glories of Islam is that it is founded upon reason, and that it never demands from its followers an abnegation of that important mental faculty. Unlike certain other faiths, which insist upon their votaries implicitly accepting certain dogmas without independent inquiry, but simply on the authority of 'The Church', Islam courts inquiry and counsels its disciples to study, search and investigate prior to acceptation. The Holy Prophet, of ever blessed memory, said: 'Allah hath not created anything better than reason, or anything more perfect or more beautiful than reason, the benefits which Allah giveth are on its account, and understanding is begotten of it.'

" On another occasion he said: 'Verily, I tell you, a man may have performed prayers, fasts, charity, pilgrimage and all other good works; but he will not be rewarded but by the manner in which he hath used and applied his reason.'

" The parable of the 'Talents', narrated by Sayyidna 'Isa, *i.e.*, Jesus (on whom be peace!), is in strict accordance with Islamic doctrine, as also is the maxim, 'Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good'. The similitude of those who follow blindly, and who neglect to use the intelligence which the Divine Giver of all good hath bestowed upon them, is declared in the imperishable pages

of Al-Qur-án Shareef (Sura 52 : Al-Jumma—'The Assembly') to be that of 'an ass laden with books'.

"The noble and learned Caliph, Hazrat Ali al-Murtaza (on whom be peace!) said: 'The world is darkness; knowledge is light; but knowledge without truth is a mere shadow!'

"Muslims believe that Islam is a term synonymous with truth, and that under the glorious and ever-brilliant sun of Islam, by the light of reason and knowledge, truth can be obtained; but in order to obtain that knowledge, and thus attain that truth, man must use his reasoning faculties.

"A most pregnant pronouncement on this question was given by our Holy Prophet only a few days prior to his decease.

"There he lay, the last and greatest of the grand chain of mighty men whom Allah, in His everlasting mercy and compassion, had sent to the world as inspired messengers of truth and of righteousness, his saintly head pillowed upon Hazrati Ayesha's loving knee.

"The true believers of Medina, old and young, men and women —aye, even the children—had gathered, in loving sympathy, there, around the mat whereon lay Mustapha Al-amin, the chosen, the faithful, ar-Rasul-Allah. Tears glistened in their eyes, and coursed down the cheeks of even the most grizzled and valiant of the veteran warriors of Islam. Their leader, their friend, their beloved pastor, and, above all, their Prophet, he who had led them from the darkness of ignorance and superstition into the radiant brightness of the truth, had brought them into Islam, the habitation of peace, was about to pass from them. No wonder, then, that their eyes became fountains of tears, and their hearts were heavy and oppressed.

"In the agony of distress, almost of despair, one exclaimed: 'O Prophet of Allah, thou art ill, thou mayest die, then what is to become of us?'

"'You have Al-Quran,' said Allah's Messenger.

"'Oh, yes, Rasul-Allah, but even with that enlightening book and unerring guide before us, we have had at times to ask from you advice, counsel, and instruction, and if you are taken from us, O Prophet, who is there to be our guide?'

"'Do as I did and as I have said,' was the reply.

"'But, Prophet, after you have gone fresh circumstances may arise which could not have arisen during thy blessed lifetime; what are we, what are those who follow us, to do then?'

"The Prophet slowly raised his illustrious and saintly head, and with the lurid light of prophecy and inspiration shining radiantly

from his noble eyes exclaimed : 'Allah hath given to every man as a personal monitor a conscience, and as a guide his reason : use it, then, in all things, and it, under Allah's blessing, will ever guide you aright."

PROFESSOR HAROUN MUSTAPHA LEON, M.A., Ph.D.

"I bought a copy of the Holy Qur'án . . . began to study it . . . talked with Arab friends . . . and it was then that I realized the wonderful strength of Islam and embraced it."

H. P. AHMAD FLISHER (England).

(*The Islamic Review*, February 1926.)

"After reading . . . books and purchasing an English translation of the Qur'án in a second-hand bookshop, I formed the opinion that to be a Muslim was the greatest blessing to be desired on earth. The faith of Islam is broadminded, clean, pure, sent by God Himself, or otherwise it would never have prospered as it has done."

ERNEST J. BROMLEY (England).

"Some months back I used to think of Muhammad as a man who preached his religion through the sword and advocated slavery, but, thank God, I have seen the truth now. I am now positive that the only way to world peace lies in the true religion of Muhammad."

T. U. DANIELL (Belgium).

"There is no compulsion in religion. In my opinion Islam is the most complete, righteous and original."

M. K. COLE (England).

(*The Islamic Review*, August 1938.)

J. W. Lovegrove (England) (d. 1939).

" These pages are a humble attempt on my part to meet inquiries which I receive from various quarters as to the reasons for my embracing Islam. I have not to make a case for the Faith. There is something unique about it. It is the religion of history and its teacher a personality in history. We know very little of other religions as to their original teachings; some scattered accounts, consisting of a few moral precepts, have been handed down to us, their genuineness being admittedly impeachable. The lives of almost all other teachers are enveloped with myth and mystery, and do not help us to read their own teachings in the light of their actions. On the other hand, in the case of Islam, no one had ever doubted the authenticity of its record. The Book of Islam, the Qur'án, is the same today as it was in the days of the Holy Prophet. His deeds and the sayings in which he translates the various precepts of the book, have come to us in their original purity, hence whatever I write in these pages is simply a paraphrase of some of the teachings I found in the Qur'án and the sayings of the Prophet. I found in them a consolation, which in vain I had searched for elsewhere. I wanted a simple, practical religion, free from dogma and tenets which I could not accept without killing my reason. To do my duty to God, and my neighbour, undoubtedly is and ought to be the

main object of every religious system, but Islam came to give the maxim a practical shape. We want precept as well as example to meet all the contingencies and exigencies of life and directions to guide us in our difficult callings. This I found in Islam."

J. W. LOVEGROVE.

"I am glad to be a Muslim . . . the laws of the Blessed Qur'án seem to be very clear and straightforward; especially do I admire the laws relating to women, which seem to be the kindest and fairest ever made for our much-maligned sex."

DOROTHY EADY (England).

"The special features which appeal to me are the Unity of God, freedom from sectarianism, and the abolition of priesthood."

JAMES E. STOOKES (England).

Muhammad Sadiq Dudley Wright (England).

"The Islamic belief in God is not a mere article of faith — a solitary item in a shadowy creed. It is deep-rooted and firm. It has been frequently said that Islam possesses the shortest creed of all the religions of the world, and, though this may be the case, so firmly fixed is the Muslim's belief in the Supreme Being that he regards with abhorrence and as blasphemy any attempt to divide in any way the Unity of God. How can the Divine Being be reduced to the level of any other? or how can He share His attributes with another? He is the Most High and He alone is to be adored, and to assert that there are three, or even two, in possession of Omnipotence is, to the Muslim, a self-evident contradiction.

"There is a majestic glory in the expressions Ar-Rahman and Ar-Rahim which cannot be found in any other words. No limits can circumscribe His beneficence. Is it a matter for wonderment that the Muslim, when he thinks of the all-embracing grace and beneficence, the Majesty and Glory of the Lord of all Existence, should prostrate himself with forehead on earth in adoration and worship? To that Lord of All the Worlds, the Muslim gives a name which is above every other name, i.e., the name of Allah, a name which has never been given to any except the only true God, a

name which embraces all the excellent names which can be enumerated.

" Islam is no mere creed : it is a life to be lived. In the Qur'án may be found directions for what are sometimes termed the minor details of daily life, but which are not minor when it is considered that life has to be lived for God. The Muslim lives for God alone. God is the centre of all satisfaction, all hope, all life. The aim of the Muslim is to become God-bound, and to endeavour to advance the knowledge of God in all his undertakings. From the cradle to the grave the true Muslim lives for God and God alone."

MUHAMMAD SADIQ DUDLEY WRIGHT.

" If the world was ever in need of Islam it is today. I am happy, very happy, to follow the ' Light ' brought to this world by that great torch-bearer, the Prophet Muhammad. Islam means much to me. It is indeed a rational faith.

" My early religious training was in the Christian faith. . . . Having lost all interest in Christianity, I began to study other world religions . . . I found Islam appeals to one's reason . . . I found that it invites and encourages the pursuit of knowledge."

HARRY E. HEINKEL (U.S.A.).

" Broadminded teachings of Islam caused me to study the Qur'án more closely, and I embraced the faith."

J. OMAR LESTER (England).

(Mrs.) Cecilia Mahmuda Connolly (Australia).

"First and foremost I would say I accepted Islam because fundamentally I had always been a Muslim without being aware of it.

"Very early in my life I had lost faith in Christianity for many reasons, the main one being that whenever I questioned any Christian, whether it was a person belonging to the so-called Holy Orders or a layman, regarding any point that puzzled me in regard to the Church teachings, I invariably received the monotonous answer, 'You must not question the teachings of the Church; you must have faith'. I did not have the courage in those days to say 'I cannot have faith in something that I do not understand', and, from my experience, neither do most of the people who call themselves Christians'. What I did do was to leave the Church (Roman Catholic) and its teaching and to place my faith in the one true God in whom it was much easier to believe than in the three Gods of the Church. By contrast with the mysteries and miracles of the Christian teaching, life took on a new and wider meaning, no longer cramped with dogma and ritual. Everywhere I looked I could see God's work. And although, in common with greater minds than my own, I could not understand the miracles that happened before my eyes, I could stand and marvel at the wonder of it all — the trees, flowers, birds and animals. Even a newborn babe became a beautiful miracle, not the same thing that

the Church had taught me to believe at all. I remembered how, when a child, I gazed at newborn babies and thought, 'It's all covered in black sin'. I no longer believed in ugliness; everything became beautiful.

"Then one day my daughter brought home a book about Islam. We became so interested in it that we followed it up with many other books on Islam. We soon realized that this was really what we believed. During the time I had believed in Christianity I had been led to believe that Islam was only something to joke about. Thus all that I then read was a revelation to me. After a while I looked up some Muslims and questioned them on some of the points that were not quite clear to me. Here again there was yet another revelation! My questions were all answered promptly and concisely, so different from the frustration I had experienced when questioning Christianity. After much reading and studying of the religion of Islam both my daughter and myself decided to become Muslims, taking the names of Rashida and Mahmuda respectively.

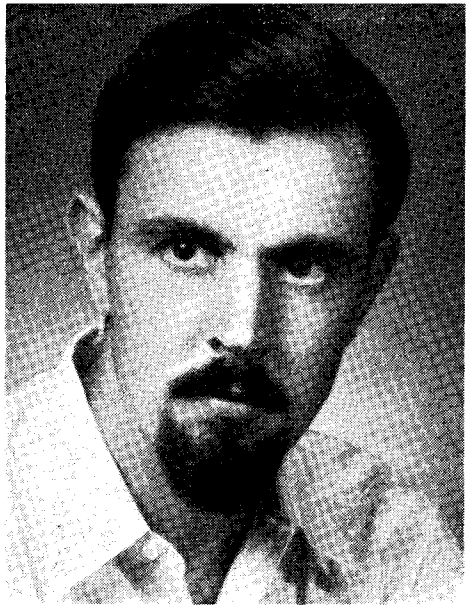
"If I were asked what impressed me most in the religion of Islam I would probably say the prayers, because prayers in Christianity are used wholly in begging God (through Jesus Christ) to grant worldly favours, whereas in Islam they are used to give praise and thanks to Almighty God for all His blessings since He knows what is necessary for our welfare and grants us what we need without our asking for it."

(Mrs.) CECILIA MAHMUDA CONNOLLY.

(*The Islamic Review*, July 1950.)

"It (Islam) is the religion of truth without any human interpolation."

JOHN OCKER-RAMSEY (England).



R. C. Dickenson (England).

"A little over two years ago I succeeded in obtaining employment in the Persian Gulf, and gradually settled down to observe the ways and the customs of the people around me. . . . Wherever I went I was impressed by these people . . . these Muslims . . . who had surrendered themselves to God and by their simplicity and hospitable acceptance of a stranger who was neither of their colour nor of their faith. Here was no hypocrisy in the farmer in the field or in the labourer in the date garden who fell prostrate before God. Not because it was 'the thing to do' or because their failure to do so would cause comment did they bow down. No! Because in Islam . . . in their submission to the Will of God . . . they had found a peace, a spiritual happiness that the material issues of the world cannot give."

R. C. DICKENSON.

(*The Islamic Review*, January 1950.)

Feysal W. Wagener (Holland).

"Reasons of various kinds made me decide to embrace Islam in January 1952. Grown up during the Second World War, I found myself after 1945 in the confused state of mind which is typical of numerous young people in present Western Europe. I was a member of the Roman Catholic Church, but I never had the courage to call myself a true Christian, for I suffered from a disharmony which was the result of a constant conflict between my rational thinking and my belief in the constant dogmas which, as a Christian, one has to accept.

"Many-sided interests and constant searching for the true religion brought me into contact with Islamic literature. The glorious Qur'án says: 'There is no nation but there has been a warner amongst them.' This verse left a great impression on me. It is a proof of the universality of Islam above all other religious systems on earth. Such a liberal teaching which enjoins us to have respect for what other prophets taught cannot be found in any other religion. The saying of the Prophet of Islam 'Seek knowledge even in China' made me understand the pro-scientific attitude of Islam, an attitude one can hardly find in the history of the Christian Churches. A deeper study of Islam made it clear to me that Islam

is a complex of religious, ethical, social, economical, political and juridical rules. It gives a satisfactory answer to all questions concerning the life of society ".

FEYSAL W. WAGENER.

(*The Islamic Review,* December 1952.)

" I think the main cause of my embracing Islam was the fact that I found it to be the only religion where faith and truth are truly predominant."

H. G. NEWITT (England).

" I had been interested for some time in comparative religion, but I have found that Islam is the religion which is of the best quality, and is a religion which has, unlike most religions, applied its doctrines practically to everyday affairs. Having come to this conclusion I began to study Islam, by means of Muhammad 'Ali's translation of al-Qur'án and many other books dealing with the teachings and life of the Prophet Muhammad ! now earnestly believe that Islam has something real and effective to offer humanity.

" I carry out the duties of Islam as far as it is possible for me to do so, and have now come to regard myself as a Muslim. I am, therefore, very interested in the progress which Islam makes in Britain and other Christian countries."

R. W. J. AUSTIN (England).

Charles Abdullah Garner (England).

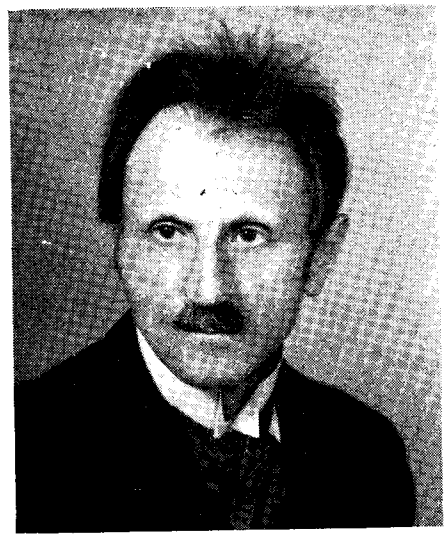
"Islam means peace with the Creator as well as with His creatures. Obeying divine commandments, as shown in doing good to fellow men, is a noble ideal and appeals to the intellect and heart."

CHARLES ABDULLAH GARNER.

(*The Islamic Review*, November 1926.)

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي
وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ
وَبِذَٰلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ۝

"Say: My prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are surely for God, the Lord of the worlds. No associate has He. And this am I commanded, and I am the first of those who submit" (The Qurán, 6: 163-164).



(Dr.) Hamid Marcus (Germany).

" As a child I had felt an inner urge to learn all I could about Islam, and I had carefully studied an old Qur'án translation, which I had found in the library of my home town and which dated back to 1750. It was the edition from which Goethe also drew his knowledge on Islam. At that time I had been deeply struck by the absolutely rationalistic and at the same time imposing composition of the Islamic teachings. I had also been very much impressed by the gigantic spiritual revolution which they evoked in the Islamic nations of that time. Later, in Berlin, I had the opportunity of working together with Muslims and listening to the enthusiastic and inspiring commentaries which the Maulana Sadr-ud-Din, the founder of the first German Muslim Mission at Berlin and builder of the Berlin Mosque, gave on the Holy Qur'án. After years of active co-operation with this outstanding personality and his spiritual exertions, I embraced Islam. . . . Islam supplemented my own ideas by some of the most ingenious conceptions of mankind ever thought of. The belief in God is something sacred to the religion of Islam. But it does not proclaim dogmas which are incompatible with modern science. Therefore there are no conflicts between belief on the one hand and science on the other. This fact is naturally a unique and enormous advantage for a man who participated to the best of his ability in scientific research. The second advantage is that the religion of Islam is not an idealistic teaching

which runs along blindly beside life as it is, but that it preaches a system which actually influences the life of a human being . . . the laws of Islam are not compulsory regulations which restrict personal freedom, but directions and guides which enable a well-contrived freedom.

"Throughout the years I have noticed time and again with deepest satisfaction that Islam holds the golden mean between individualism and socialism, between which it forms a connecting link. As it is unbiased and tolerant, it always appreciates the good, wherever it may happen to come across it."

(Dr.) HAMID MARCUS.

"One always chooses the shortest path to reach a destination, and I am sure Islam provides the shortest though most difficult path towards that goal.

"I was a Roman Catholic before accepting Islam, but I lost faith in those rites such as the Trinity, Holy Communion, consecration of the host, mysteries, etc. I did not lose faith in God. No Catholic priest could help me by explaining these problems rationally, and the only reply was 'Mysteries will remain mysteries; Jesus is the last prophet and Muhammad is an impostor' (God forbid !).

"My faith dwindled in that religion until I happened to mix with lots of Muslims in Malaya. I used to talk about religion with them and we sometimes had heated arguments. Gradually I became convinced that Islam is rational and that Islam is what I know as truth. There is nothing to adore but God. No images, statues or paintings are found in a mosque. It is prayer in a mosque or anywhere that has won me over. . . ."

IBRAHIM VOO (Malaya).

"I feel happy to embrace the true, simple, sincere and natural faith of Islam. It is free from dogma. There is no intercession (priesthood) in it. Its broadmindedness and elasticity, with simple principle, appeal to my reason."

JESSIE (AMEENA) DAVIDSON (England).

Ismail Wieslaw Jezierski (Poland).

"I was born in Krakow, Poland, on 8th January 1900 in a family which belongs to the Polish nobility. My father, although an atheist, was tolerant enough to allow the education of his children in the Roman Catholic religion, which is professed, more or less superficially, by the majority of the Polish people, and which was the religion of my mother. Thus I imbibed in my infancy a true respect for religion, which I looked upon as a factor of cardinal importance in the life of the individual and of the community.

"Another feature of the home of my parents was its cosmopolitan atmosphere. My father, when a young man, travelled widely in different European countries and often talked about his adventures. This atmosphere gave rise to the fact that racial, national and cultural prejudices were always foreign to my mind. I always felt myself a citizen of the whole world.

"The third feature of my home was the spirit of the 'middle path'. My father, although a descendant of an aristocratic family, despised the 'leisured classes' and hated all forms of dictatorship and oppression, but did not approve of revolutionary acts against the public order. He appreciated progress based on the best traditions inherited from the past. He was a model of a 'man of the middle path'. It is not to be wondered at that when I became an independent thinker interested particularly in social problems, I always sought the middle path leading to the solution of different

difficulties of social, political, economic and cultural life. I always felt that extremes are contradictory to the nature of the majority of human beings, and that, consequently, only a compromise can save mankind. I always believed that the organization of human society must be based on disciplined freedom or, in other words, on an order which respects liberty, and that tradition must be reconciled with progress, which should be nothing else but the adaptation of tradition to actual conditions. No wonder that, having been educated in the spirit of the 'middle path'. I am a 'man of the middle path' too, and may be called a 'progressive traditionalist'.

"As an adolescent sixteen years old I became decidedly sceptical as regards the different dogmas preached by the 'infallible' Roman Catholic Church. I was unable to believe in the Holy Trinity, transubstantiation, mediatorship of priests between God and man and vice versa, the infallibility of the Pope, and the efficacy of magical words and gestures. I was unable to reconcile myself with the worship of Mary, saints, relics, pictures, statues and other objects. Finally, I lost all my faith and became indifferent to matters religious.

"The outbreak of the Second World War caused a religious renaissance in me. God opened my eyes and I perceived that humanity wants ideals, and that she cannot spare those ideals if she wishes to avoid extermination. It was clear to me that only religion could give such ideals to the world.

"But, on the other hand, it was also clear to me that modern man cannot be satisfied with a religion the dogmas and rites of which offend the rational mind. Besides, I felt that mankind could be guided only by a religion which presented a perfect and complete code of individual and social life.

"Seeking for the truth and for the spiritual fatherland of mine, I studied the ideologies of different religions, in particular the history and principles of Quakerism, Unitarianism, Buddhism and Baha'ism, but none of these religions satisfied me entirely.

"Finally, I 'discovered' Islam. A small pamphlet entitled *Islamo esperantiste rigardata,* written in Esperanto by an English Muslim, Mr. Isma'il Colin Evans, opened my ears to the voice of God in February 1949. Later, I received a small pamphlet entitled *Islamo chies religio* from Dar Tabliqh al-Islam, P.O. Box 112, Cairo, and some works of the Maulana Muhammad 'Ali (*The Holy Qur'án, The Religion of Islam, The Living Thoughts of the Prophet Muhammad,* and *The New World Order)* from the Joint Secretary, Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at-i-Islam, Lahore, Pakistan.

"I have found Islam to be congenial to my mind and to the ideology in which I was educated in my infancy. I have found in

Islam a perfect and complete code of life, which code is able to guide the individual and the community towards the Kingdom of God on earth and which is elastic enough to be adapted to modern conditions. Being a theorist of culture and sociology, I am enchanted by the social institutions of Islam, in particular by the *zakat*, the law of inheritance, the prohibition of usury including interest, the prohibition of aggressive wars, the injunction of the *Hajj*, and the permission of permitted polygamy, which respectively guarantee a right path between Capitalism and Communism, define the right limits of quarrels between States and give a firm basis to rational pacifism, present an excellent means of educating fraternal solidarity between Muslims, whatever their race, nationality, language, culture and social class may be, and lay solid foundations of marriage, which foundations are irrefutably justified by the biological and social facts and are much more sound than the superficial and insincere monogamy of the Western peoples.

"To close these confessions of mine, I thank God for His favour, which He has bestowed upon me by showing me the 'right path'."

W. JEZIERSKI.

(*The Islamic Review*, May 1951.)

"Strangely, Christian intolerance awakened my first interest in Islam. When a boy, I attended a missionary lecture and was greatly impressed by some of the speakers who had lived among the 'bloodthirsty Mohammedans'. When a few years later I had the good fortune to listen to a Muslim missionary, I was greatly impressed by his wonderful forbearance in dealing with a crowd who had left their own (Christian) meeting to heckle the 'heathen'. His words greatly impressed me and shattered completely my staunch Christian beliefs.

"On several occasions, having asked a Christian priest a certain question, I have been answered thus: 'I cannot tell you; you must believe it; that is where faith comes in'.

"How different is Islam, wherein no question is beyond, or beneath, answering.

"That great German, Goethe, himself remarked after reading the Holy Qur'án. 'If this is Islam, then every thinking man among us is, in fact, a Muslim'.

"The churches are utterly incapable of grappling with present-day problems. Islam, alone, offers the solution."

JOHN FISHER (England).

(*The Islamic Review*, July 1934.)

Patrick Ernest Chipperfield (England).

" For some eighteen months I had been very unsettled in my mind, for although I have always tried to live a ' good and upright life ', something has been lacking. That something is without doubt a faith. Ever since I left school in 1935 I found that the religion of my upbringing (the Church of England Christianity) failed to meet the conditions I found in the outside world. I therefore, to the best of my ability, built up my own code for living. This has worked up to a point ; in fact, the first doubts as to its adequacy did not arise until I was sent to the Middle East in 1941. It was then, whilst on leave, that I went to Cairo, and, among other things, visited the Muhammad 'Ali Mosque and the Blue Mosque. These visits stirred something within me and I remember that I left the mosques with a feeling of peace and happiness that was new to me. . . .

" About eighteen months ago I was in Foyle's bookshop in Charing Cross Road, London, looking for some second-hand copies of Major Jarvis's books on his life in Egypt between the wars, when I found a copy of Mr. Lovegrove's (Habeeb-Ullah) booklet, *What is Islam?* I included the booklet in my purchases and read it. I then proceeded to the Public Library and borrowed all the books I could find that dealt with the Middle East generally and had any reference to Islam in them. Some were good, others were not so good, muddled thinking and misinformation being apparent. From all this reading fortified by Mr. Lovegrove's booklet, sprang the

realization that all was not well in my life and that something was definitely missing. I was considerably shaken by this realization, but I did not know quite what to do about it. I had no one to talk to about these things. Those who might have been sufficiently neutral I did not know well enough to unburden myself to, and those I did know well enough would have been easily biased. I therefore put the matter to one side (or tried to) for the whole of last summer, resolving to see how I felt after a lapse of time. At intervals all through the summer the feeling that I must do something about it kept cropping up. This got stronger as the months went by. It was not until Christmas Day, when a friend of mine came in on duty, in place of one of my own crew, so that he could have Christmas 'off', that I talked. The result of his counsel was my visit to you.

"The standard of life I had set for myself corresponded very closely to the teaching of Islam, but Islam goes so much further and provides the answer to many problems for which I have had no answer; in fact, it would appear that there is no problem for which Islam cannot provide guidance. I believe in God, but I found that I could not believe in Him in the way I had been taught. I therefore had to develop my own conception of Him, and from this developed what I hoped was a right and proper mode of life. I made mistakes and I have had my failures in the face of temptation, but I have tried to do what I believed to be right. And now, after reading all the literature which I received from the Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust, I am quite convinced that Islam is the True Faith. This conviction has come after much thought and meditation, and has been growing on me for some time, as perhaps my story shows. I had to be sure of myself, for this is the greatest event of my life; that is why I waited some eighteen months before embracing Islam: I had to be sure this was no passing phase. Verily, it was not a passing phase, for my conviction prospered and grew within me, and I found myself putting into practice what little I had learned of the teachings of Islam."

PATRICK ERNEST CHIPPERFIELD.

(*The Islamic Review,* June 1952.)

"I read books on almost every kind of faith until I came to Islam, and the more I read of Islam, the more certain I became that I had found something which was more convincing to me in the nature of what I was looking for than any I had tried before."

STANLEY ANYAN (England).

Mrs. H. Buchanan-Hamilton (England).

"The extreme simplicity coupled with extreme sincerity of the worship of Islam by its followers, impresses me with the feeling that this faith occupies the first place in the universe."

H. BUCHANAN-HAMILTON.

(*The Islamic Review,* December 1929.)

"The difference between Islam and all other religions is that other religions say that through faith you may act; Islam says, rather, that through action faith must be born."[1]

ALI AHMAD KNUD HOLMBOE (Denmark).

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1 Mr. Holmboe was a Dane and a journalist of established repute in his country. He is the author of a good many books, including the famous *The Desert Encounter*. The book exposed the brutalities of Italian Fascists in Libya.

(Major) 'Abdullah Battersby (England).

" Many years ago, a quarter of a century at least, it was a part of my daily experience to travel along the waterways of Burma by sampan. . . . My sampan-wallah was a Muslim — Sheikh 'Ali, from Chittagong, a splendid sailor, and keenly observant of the rules of his faith. The consistency with which he maintained the hours of prayer and the obvious sincerity of his pious practice not only gained my respect but stimulated my interest in a faith that could hold such a man in pious thrall. Around us were Burmese Buddhists, who also exhibited a great piety, and who were, as far as my experience informed me, probably the most charitable people on earth. But there seemed to be something lacking in their religious practice. I knew they attended the pagodas, because I saw the old folk squatted there, uttering the formula of their creed :

Buddha carana gacchami
Dhamma carana gacchami
Sangha carana gacchami,

thus proclaiming that they accepted the joint guidance of the Buddha, the law, and the order, for the conduct of their spiritual lives. It was too placid, it lacked vigour, and was totally unlike the practice of Sheikh 'Ali, the sampan-wallah. I talked to him as we sailed along the narrow creeks and streams. He was not so good at telling others of the things that inspired him with pious

zeal, as he was a splendid example of the inspirational power of Islam.

"I bought some books about the history and teachings of Islam. . . . I learned of the life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him!) and of his great achievements. I sometimes discussed them with some of my Muslim friends who called themselves Zerbadis. Then the First World War broke out and, like a good many others, I found myself serving with the Indian Army in Mesopotamia. I was away from the Buddhist lands and among the Arabs, the people from whom the Prophet sprang, and in whose language the Holy Qur'án was recorded. The fact that I was among these people encouraged my further interest in understanding Islam. I studied Arabic and made close contact with the people, admiring the consistency of their worship of God, till I found myself also acknowledging that God was, indeed, a unity; whereas from my childhood I had been reared to accept God was a Trinity. It had now become patent to me that God was not a Trinity but a Unity: *La ilaha il 'l-Lah* — and I was inclined to declare myself a Muslim. In fact, although I ceased entirely attending churches, and also only visited mosques when it was my official duty as a police officer to do so, it was only when in Palestine between the years 1936 and 1942 that I took courage of conviction and made an official declaration of my change of faith to the Islam that had been my choice for so many years.

"It was a grand day when, in the *Mahkamat al-Shari'ah* in the City of Jerusalem, known in the Arab lands by the name of al-Quds, meaning the Sacred, that I publicly announced myself a Muslim. I was at the time a General Staff Officer, and this action of mine brought about some unpleasant reactions. . . .

"Since that time, I have lived and practised the faith of Islam, in Egypt and more recently in Pakistan. . . . Islam is the greatest fraternity — some 500,000,000 strong, and to belong to it is to belong to God, and if I have been able, in recent years, to give witness for Islam by my life and writings, surely a credit mark has been inscribed in the register of life for that simple man whose piety brought me back to God, and to Islam, for we are all born Muslims, and I, in human weakness, had gone astray.

"I thank God, *al-Hamdu li 'l-Lah,* that I am today one of this great brotherhood of Islam, and when I pray, I always offer up a supplication for the soul of the poor boatman, whose personal piety led me to seek for myself the source of his consistent faith.

> '*Allah*! There is none other God but He,
> The Living God, the Self-subsistent One;
> Weariness cometh not to Him, nor sleep;
> And whatso is belongs to Him alone

In heaven and earth —
With Him of all things secret are the keys ;
None other hath them, but He hath ; and sees
Whatever is in land, or air, or water,
Each bloom that blows, each foam-bell on the seas '."

(Major) 'ABDULLAH BATTERSBY.

(*The Islamic Review*, March 1955.)

" It was in the summer of the year 1936 that I became a Muslim. Two months after my ' apostasy ' I lost my job due to the fact that my manager would not allow me to go to the mosque. My mother and close relations and neighbours felt that I had made a big mistake. After two months my wife also forsook me. It was not an easy matter to be forsaken and friendless. The only fact that consoled me was that God was above everything. Books written by al-Hajj Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din and the Maulana Muhammad 'Ali were always a source of refuge for me and I continued in my belief that none but God Almighty remained truthful through the teachings of His great Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God !).

" One can imagine my suffering ; the loss of a home and friends. I was like a stranger sojourning in a foreign land. But the fact that in Islam all are one and equal made me feel very happy and to this day I have continued the practice of studying this religion and to know more and more about it. Today I am very happy and proud to be called a follower and believer in this most truthful religion.

" Today I feel a much better man in traits and habits, a respectable citizen and a true Muslim. I have great respect for my fellow Muslims and pray that God may show light to those who are still groping in darkness."

MUSTAPHA COLLEY (Gambia).

(*The Islamic Review*, November-December 1938.)

" I found that Islam was the only religion that could claim to be the revealed word of God."

ABDULLAH UNO KULLER (Sweden).

Sir Archibald Hamilton (England).

"Since arriving at an age of discretion, the beauty and the simple purity of Islam have always appealed to me. I could never, though born and brought up as a Christian, believe in the dogmatic aspect of the Church; and have always placed reason and common sense before blind faith.

"As time progressed, I wished to be at peace with my Creator, and I found that both the Church of Rome and the Church of England were of no real use to me.

"In becoming a Muslim I have merely obeyed the dictates of my conscience, and have since felt a better and a truer man.

"There is no religion that is so maligned by the ignorant and biased as is Islam; yet if people only knew, it is the only true solution for the problem of Socialism, inasmuch as it is the religion of the strong for the weak, the rich for the poor. Humanity is divided into three classes. First, those on whom God has, out of His bounty, bestowed possessions and wealth; secondly, those who have to work to earn their living; and, lastly, the great army of the unemployed, or those who have fallen by the wayside through no fault of their own. . . .

"Again, Islam recognizes genius and individuality. It is constructive and not destructive. For example, if a landowner who is rich and is not in need of cultivating his land refrains from doing so for some time, his property *ipso facto* becomes public property, and, according to Islamic law, passes into the hands of the first person who cultivates it.

" Islam strictly forbids its adherents to gamble or to indulge in any games of chance. It prohibits all alcoholic drinks and interdicts usury, which alone has caused enough sorrow and suffering to mankind. Thus, in Islam, none can take a mean advantage of another who is less fortunate.

" We neither believe in fatalism nor in predestination, but only in pre-measurement; that is to say, the fixity of the laws and the intelligence to follow them.

" To us, Faith without Action is a dead-letter; for in itself it is insufficient unless we live up to it. We believe in our own personal accountability for our actions in this life and the Hereafter. We must carry our own cross and none can atone for another's sin.

" Islam teaches the inherent sinlessness of man. It teaches that man and woman come from the same essence, possess the same soul, and have been equipped with equal capabilities for intellectual, spiritual and moral attainment.

" I do not think I need say much about the Universal Brotherhood of man in Islam. It is a recognized fact. Lord and vassal, rich and poor, are all alike. I have always found that my brother Muslims have been the soul of honour and that I could believe their word. They have always treated me justly, as a man and a brother, and have extended to me the greatest hospitality, and I have always felt at home with them.

" In conclusion, I would like to say that whereas Islam guides humanity in the daily workaday life, the present-day so-called Christianity, indirectly in theory and invariably in practice, teaches its followers, it would seem, to pray to God on Sundays and to prey on His creatures for the rest of the week."

SIR ARCHIBALD HAMILTON, Bt.[1].

(*The Islamic Review*, February 1924.)

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1 The late Sir 'Abdullah Archibald Hamilton, Bt., born 10th December 1876, embraced Islam on 20th December 1923. A well-known figure in English society, he was the fifth Baronet of the first (1776) and third baronet of the second creation (1819). He married in 1897 Olga, only daughter of Rear-Admiral Sir Adolphus FitzGeorge, K.C.V.O., and granddaughter of Field-Marshal His Royal Highness the late Duke of Cambridge, first cousin to Queen Victoria. By this marriage he had one son, George Edward Archibald Augustus FitzGeorge, born in 1898, at whose baptism their Majesties, the late King George V and Queen Mary, attended in person as sponsors. His son became a Lieutenant in the Grenadier Guards in 1917 and fell in action in Flanders in 1918, aged 19 years.

In the above article, written specially for *The People* (13th January 1924), Sir Archibald states quite frankly the reasons for his change of creed.

Professor A. K. Germanus (Hungary).

"It was on a rainy afternoon in my adolescence that I was perusing an old illustrated review. Current events mingled with fiction, and descriptions of far-off countries, varied in its pages. I turned the leaves indifferently for a while when suddenly a wood-cut arrested my eyes. The picture represented flat-roofed houses from among which here and there round cupolas rose gently into the dark sky enlivened by the crescent. The shadow of men squatting on the roof clad in fantastic robes stretched out in mysterious lines. The picture caught my imagination. It was so different from the usual European landscapes. . . . It was an Oriental scene, somewhere in the Arabian East, where a story-teller told his gaudy tales to a *burnoused* audience. It was so realistic that I fancied I could hear his melodious voice as he entertained us, his Arab listeners on the roof and me, a sixteen-year-old student sitting in a soft arm-chair in Hungary. I felt an irresistible yearning to know that light which fought with the darkness in the picture. . . .

"I began to learn Turkish. It soon dawned upon me that the literary Turkish language contains only a small amount of Turkish words. The poetry is enriched by Persian, the prose by Arabic elements. I sought to master all the three, in order to enter that spiritual world which spread such a brilliant light on humanity.

"During a summer vacation I was lucky to travel to Bosnia, the nearest Oriental country adjacent to ours. . . . As soon as I

settled in a hotel I dashed forth to see living Muslims, whose Turkish language had only beckoned to me through its intricate Arabic script from the pages of grammar books. It was night, and in the dimly-lit streets I soon discovered a humble café in which on low straw stools a couple of Bosnians enjoyed their *kayf*. They wore the traditional bulging trousers kept straight at the waist by a broad belt bristling with daggers. Their headgear and the unfamiliar costume lent them an air of truculence. It was with a throbbing heart that I entered the *kahwekhane* and timidly sat down in a distant corner. The Bosnians looked with curious eyes upon me and I suddenly remembered all the bloodcurdling stories read in fanatical books about Muslim intolerance. I noticed that they were whispering among themselves and their topic was my unexpected presence. My childish imagination flared up in horror: they surely intended to draw their daggers on the intruding 'infidel'. I wished I could safely get out of this threatening environment, but I dared not budge.

"In a few seconds the waiter brought me a cup of fragrant coffee and pointed to the frightening group of men. I turned a fearful face towards them when one made a gentle *salaam* towards me accompanied with a friendly smile. I hesitatingly forced a smile on my trembling lips. The imagined 'foes' slowly rose and approached my little table. What now? — my throbbing heart inquired — will they oust me? A second *salaam* followed and they sat around me. One of them offered me a cigarette and at its flickering light I noticed that their martial attire hid a hospitable soul. I gathered strength and addressed them in my primitive Turkish. It acted like a magic wand. Their faces lit up in friendliness akin to affection. . . . Instead of hostility they invited me to their homes; instead of the falsely anticipated daggers they showered benevolence upon me. This was my first personal meeting with Muslims. . . .

"Years had come and passed in a rich variety of events, travels and study. Each opened new vistas before my curious eyes. I crossed all the countries of Europe, studied at the University of Constantinople, admired the historic beauties of Asia Minor and Syria. I had learnt Turkish, Persian and Arabic, and gained the chair of Islamic studies at the University of Budapest. All the dry and tangible knowledge that was hoarded up through centuries, all the thousand pages of learned books I had read with eager eyes — but my soul remained thirsty. I found Ariadne's thread in the books of learning, but I yearned for the evergreen garden of religious experience. . . .

"My brain was satiated but my soul remained thirsty. I had to divest myself of much of that learning I had gathered, in order

to regain it through an inner experience ennobled in the fire of suffering, as the crude iron which the pain of sudden cold tempers into elastic steel.

"One night the Prophet Muhammad appeared before me. His long beard was reddened with *henna,* his robes were simple but very exquisite, and an agreeable scent emanated from them. His eyes glittered with a noble fire and he addressed me with a manly voice, 'Why do you worry? The straight path is before you, safely spread out like the face of the earth; walk on it with trusty treads, with the strength of Faith'.

"'O Messenger of God' I exclaimed in my feverish dream in Arabic, 'it is easy for you, who are beyond, who have conquered all foes when heavenly admonition has started you on your path and your efforts have been crowned with glory. But I have yet to suffer, and who knows when I shall find rest?'

"He looked sternly at me and then sank into thought, but after a while he again spoke. His Arabic was so clear that every word rang like silver bells. This prophetic tongue which incorporated God's commands now weighed upon my breast with a crushing load: *'A lam naj'ali 'l-Arda mihadan* — Have We not set the earth as a couch, and the mountains as stakes, and created you in pairs, and made your sleep for rest . . .!'

"'I cannot sleep,' I groaned with pain. 'I cannot solve the mysteries which are covered by impenetrable veils. Help me, Muhammad, O Prophet of God! help me!'

"A fierce, interrupted cry broke forth from my throat. I tossed chokingly under the burden of the nightmare — I feared the wrath of the Prophet. Then I felt as if I had dropped into the deep — and suddenly I awoke. The blood knocked in my temples, my body was bathed in sweat, my every limb ached. A deadly silence enveloped me, and I felt very sad and lonely. . . .

"The next Friday witnessed a curious scene in the huge Jumu'a Masjid of Delhi. A fair-haired pale-faced stranger elbowed his way, accompanied by some elders, through the thronging crowd of believers. I wore an Indian dress, on my head a small Rampuri cap. I put on my breast the Turkish orders, presented to me by previous sultans. The believers gazed at me in astonishment and surprise. Our small party paced straight on to the pulpit, which had been surrounded by the learned, respectable elders, who received me kindly with a loud *salaam.* I sat down near the *mimbar* (pulpit) and let my eyes gaze on the beautifully ornamented front of the mosque. In its middle arcade wild bees had built their nests and swarmed undisturbed around it.

"Suddenly the *adhan* (call to prayers) was sounded and the *mukabbirs,* standing on different spots of the courtyard, forwarded

the cry to the farthest nook of the mosque. Some four thousand men rose like soldiers at this heavenly command, rallied in close rows and said the prayer in deep devotion — I one among them. It was an exalting moment. After the *Khutba* (sermon) had been preached, 'Abdul Hayy took me by my hand and conducted me to the *mimbar*. I had to walk warily so as not to step on someone squatting on the ground. The great event had arrived. I stood at the steps of the *mimbar*. The huge mass of men began to stir. Thousands of turbaned heads turned into a flowery meadow, curiously murmuring towards me. Grey-bearded *'ulama* (savants) encircled me and stroked me with their encouraging looks. They inspired an unusual steadfastness into me, and without any fever or fear I slowly ascended to the seventh step of the *mimbar*. From above I surveyed the interminable crowd, which waved below me like a living sea. Those who stood afar stretched their necks towards me, and this seemed to set the whole courtyard in motion. *'Ma sha Allah,'* exclaimed some nearby, and warm, affectionate looks radiated from their eyes.

" *'Ayyuh al-Saadaat al-Kiram,'* I started in Arabic — 'I came from a distant land to acquire knowledge which I could not gain at home. I came to you for inspiration and you responded to the call.' I then proceeded and spoke of the task Islam has played in the world's history, of the miracle God has wrought with His Prophet. I expatiated on the decline of present-day Muslims and of the means whereby they could gain ascendancy anew. It is a Muslim saying that all depends on God's will, but the Holy Qur'án says that, 'God betters not the condition of a people unless they improve themselves'. I built my speech on this Qur'ánic sentence and wound up with the praise of pious life, and the fight against wickedness.

"Then I sat down. I was aroused from the magnetic trance of my speech by a loud *'Allahu Akbar'*, shouted from every nook of the place. The thrill was overwhelming, and I hardly remember anything but that Aslam called me from the *mimbar*, took me by the arm and dragged me out of the mosque.

" 'Why this hurry?' I asked.

"Men stood before me and embraced me. Many a poor suffering fellow looked with imploring eyes on me. They asked for my blessing and wanted to kiss my hand. 'O God!' I exclaimed, 'don't allow innocent souls to lift me above them! I am a worm from among the worms of the earth, a wanderer towards the Light, just as powerless as the other miserable creatures.' The sighs and hopes of those innocent people shamed me as if I had stolen or cheated. What a terrible burden it must be for a statesman, in whom people

believe, from whom they hope for assistance, and whom they consider to be better than themselves!

"Aslam liberated me from the embraces of my new brethren, put me in a *tonga* and drove me home. . . .

"The next day and the following ones people flocked to congratulate me, and I gathered so much warmth and spirit from their affection as will suffice me for a lifetime."

A. K. GERMANUS.

(*The Islamic Review*, June 1950.)

يَاأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ○ وَلَا
تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتٌ ۚ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَٰكِنْ لَا
تَشْعُرُونَ ○ وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِنَ
الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ ○ الَّذِينَ إِذَا
أَصَابَتْهُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ○ أُولَٰئِكَ
عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ ۖ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ ○

"O you who believe, seek assistance through patience and prayer; surely God is with the patient. And speak not of those who are slain in God's way as dead. Nay (they are) alive, but you perceive not. And We shall certainly try you with something of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits. And give good news to the patient, who when a misfortune befalls them say: 'Surely we are God's, and to Him we shall return'. Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord, and those are the followers of the right course" (The Qur'án, 2: 153-7).

(Col.) Donald S. Rockwell (U.S.A.).

"The simplicity of Islam, the powerful appeal and the compelling atmosphere of its mosques, the earnestness of its faithful adherents, the confidence inspiring realization of the millions throughout the world who answer the five daily calls to prayer — these factors attracted me from the first. But after I had determined to become a follower of Islam, I found many deeper reasons for confirming my decision. The mellow concept of life — fruit of the Prophet's combined course of action and contemplation — the wise counsel, the admonitions to charity and mercy, the broad humanitarianism, the pioneer declaration of woman's property rights — these and other factors of the teachings of the man of Mecca were to me among the most obvious evidence of a practical religion so tersely and so aptly epitomised in the cryptic words of Muhammad, 'Trust in God and tie your camel'. He gave us a religious system of normal action, not blind faith in the protection of an unseen force in spite of our own neglect, but confidence that if we do all things rightly and to the best of our ability, we may trust in what comes as the Will of God.

"The broadminded tolerance of Islam for other religions recommends it to all lovers of liberty. Muhammad admonished his followers to treat well the believers in the Old and New

Testaments; and Abraham, Moses and Jesus are acknowledged as co-prophets of the One God. Surely this is generous and far in advance of the attitudes of other religions.

"The total freedom from idolatry . . . is a sign of the salubrious strength and purity of the Muslim faith. . . .

"The original teachings of the Prophet of God have not been engulfed in the maze of changes and additions of doctrinarians. The Qur'án remains as it came to the corrupt polytheistic people of Muhammad's time, changeless as the holy heart of Islam itself.

"Moderation and temperance in all things, the keynote of Islam, won my unqualified approbation. The health of his people was cherished by the Prophet, who enjoined them to observe strict cleanliness and specified fasts and to subordinate carnal appetites . . . when I stood in the inspiring mosques of Istanbul, Damascus, Jerusalem, Cairo, Algiers, Tangier, Fez and other cities, I was conscious of a powerful reaction . . . the potent uplift of Islam's simple appeal to the sense of higher things, unaided by elaborate trappings, ornamentation, figures, pictures, music and ceremonial ritual. The mosque is a place of quiet contemplation and self-effacement in the greater reality of the One God. . . .

"The democracy of Islam has always appealed to me. Potentate and pauper have the same rights on the floor of the mosque, on their knees in humble worship. There are no rented pews nor special reserved seats.

"The Muslim accepts no man as a mediator between himself and his God. He goes direct to the invisible source of creation and life, God, without reliance on a saving formula of repentance of sins and belief in the power of a teacher to afford him salvation.

"The universal brotherhood of Islam, regardless of race, politics, colour or country, has been brought home to me most keenly many times in my travels, and this is another feature which drew me towards the Faith. . . ."

DONALD S. ROCKWELL.

(*The Islamic Review*, April 1935.)

(Col. D. S. Rockwell was born at Taylorville, Illinois, U.S.A., and was educated at Springfield High School, Washington. He completed his studies at the Universities of Washington and Columbia, where he won many scholastic honours. Col. D. S. Rockwell is a poet, literary critic, an author and Editor-in-Chief of *Radio Personalities*. He embraced Islam in 1935. Two of his well-known books are *Beyond the Brim* and *Bazaar of Dreams*. He has visited many Muslim countries.)

Fauzuddin Ahmad Overing (Holland).

" It is difficult to say how my first interest in the Eastern world was aroused. It was purely linguistic at first. I started learning Arabic when still at the primary school, when I was about twelve or thirteen, some thirty years ago. But as I had no one to help me, I did not make much headway at first.

" It goes without saying that by the study of Arabic I came into contact with Islam. I bought several books about it; though all were written by Western authors and, therefore, not always unbiased, I became convinced of the truth of the Prophet's mission (the peace and the blessings of God be on him !). But my knowledge about Islam was rather restricted, and I had no one to guide me.

" The book that influenced me most was E. G. Browne's *History of Persian Literature in Modern Times.* This brilliant work contains parts of two poems that were decisive for my conversion : the " Tarji'-Band " by Hatif of Isfahan, and the " Haft-Band " by Mohtashim of Kashan.

" At first Hatif's poem appealed to me most. It gives a beautiful visionary picture of a soul in turmoil, in a struggle for a higher conception of life, in which I discovered — on a lower level, of course — my own struggle for Truth. Although I cannot agree with some of its couplets, it taught me at least one great Truth :

'There He is One, and there is naught but He,
That there is no god save Him alone!'

". . . According to the wish of my mother, and in accordance with my own inclination, I went to a special school for religious instruction, not because I adhered to its religious principles (which were very broadminded), but some knowledge of Christianity was thought necessary for a general education. I think the Principal of that school was rather surprised when at the end of the curriculum I handed in a composition in which I confessed my adherence to the Islamic faith!

"My faith in those early days was, however, irrational. It was a conviction, which, though genuine, was not yet armed by reason against the first onslaught of the rational materialism of the West. . . .

"It is then that the question arises: But why choose Islam, why not the religion in which one happened to be born (if any)? The answer is contained in the question itself: *Islam is being at peace with oneself and the world and — with God, that is, submission to the will of God.* Though the beauty and majestic terseness of the Qur'án 89 : 27-30 is lost in the translation, I will quote God's word:

'O soul that art at rest! Return to thy Lord, well-pleased with Him, well-pleasing Him. So enter among My servants. And enter in My garden.'

". . . Islam, therefore, is the only pure religion, not a religion marred by a mythology, like Christianity and other religions. . . .

"Compare the Christian doctrine that an infant is responsible for the sins of its forbears, with God's consoling words:

'And no soul earns evil but against itself, and no bearer of a burden shall bear the burden of another' (The Qur'án, 6 : 165).

'We do not impose on any soul a duty except to the extent of its ability' (The Qur'án, 7 : 42)."

FAUZUDDIN AHMAD OVERING.

(*The Islamic Review*, August 1950.)

"The more I think on the matter the more certain am I that Islam is the only logical faith, and I hope that in my own small way I shall be able to spread the truth to others. Never in my life before have I been so stirred by faith as in these past few weeks."

H. R. EASTGATE (England).

Ahmad Percy Robinson (England).

"My embrace of Islam I feel to be the logical issue from protracted inquiry and investigation of religion over several decades and, in its range, covering substantially all that is known and set forth by accredited writers upon that vast subject from Socrates to John Wesley, on the one hand, and from Celsus to Voltaire upon the other. . . .

"In the Qur'án, the first and most powerful witness to its continued purity and authority for us today is the beautiful method employed by the Almighty author to ensure its inimitable continuance in that state.

"The Qur'án, then, originally delivered by Divine means to a perfectly or completely illiterate man, ensures its claims to Divine authorship and preservation intact, as such, by the exquisitely simple means or method of recitative retention in the human mind from generation to generation *ad infinitum*.

"Again, in the sequel to its original delivery by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on his soul!), we find the most ferocious, fearless, arrogant and bloodthirsty of races, the sons of Ishmael, bowing themselves before it, and with faces in the very dust itself! Tamed! Completely tamed, before the Holy Words of God — the Merciful, the Beneficent! . . .

"Surely this is sufficient for any man or woman as witness or support to the perfect claim the Qur'án makes to being alone today the pure Book of God, while it again calls upon such men and

women to exclaim, 'There is but one God, Muhammad is His Messenger'.

"So, as the conclusion to my fifty years' quest, I myself, like unto our fierce Arabian forbears, bow my face to the very dust before its claims upon me and joyfully declare, *Allahu Akbar!*"

PERCY ROBINSON.

"High was my spirit when I first studied Islam (the religion of truth), but higher it is in writing to you that I heartily embraced the faith, which I confess has elevated me to my present state of happiness. I could not imagine what heavenly impulse led me to study this simple religion of Truth and Peace; for had it been otherwise, I would for ever have dwelt in perfect darkness and ignorance. I acknowledge the superiority of Islam over all other existing religions, all of which are nothing but dogmatic. . . . When a Catholic I was very sceptical about religious matters. In truth, I was never religious, and was even an atheist at times. Islam came like light from above to dispel my gloom. I can now feel the vivid impression of what that light imparted to my life. . . . I believe it is the only religion that can bind conflicting nations into a solid brotherhood. I have never before felt the sweet, almost tangible, feeling of peace and love, never before realized my real duties to God and my fellow men."

HABIB UL-RAHMAN JUMALON (the Philippines).

"I have studied Islam for many months, and have found happiness and contentment both spiritually and morally more than I have ever known before."

AYESHA KHATOON MURIEL SMITH (England).

"I have always longed for that peace which at last I have found in Islam. It is all so natural. . . ."

DAISY WILKINS (England).

Geo. T. Tyler (England).

" Not satisfied with many of the tenets of the Christian faith, I studied the Holy Qur'án. Islam is a clean, wholesome faith and makes the salvation of man his own duty, and not dependent on the sacrifice of a 'Son of God'."

GEO. T. TYLER.

" I have decided to join the universal fraternity of Islam. I have studied it and have also learnt the prayers. . . . I think Islam is a beautiful faith. I shall always be proud to be a follower and try my best to be faithful to it."

VERA WADE (England).

Abd al-Rahman Roseler (Germany).

" Islam is actually the only religion which commands man to embrace all forms of religions of this earth and declares him unjust who thinks he must exclude just one moral leader. They all wore the same banner of Islam. Even the most mythical nations of disappeared cultures (which had to be self-ruled owing to more or less isolation caused by technical undevelopment at that time or to obstacles) were given moral leaders or prophets who gave to them continually a fresh revelation of the unchanged moral law-book — the last edition of this moral law-book through Muhammad is a revelation which applies to all mankind now united with one another by earth-spanning techniques and experiences — a revelation which in its uniform construction is not destined for one single nation or circle of nations but satisfies by its practical nature the most modern requests and demands of all nations of this earth.

" Owing to this universal message every man will be in a position to comprehend and grasp it. And because universal, because applying to everyone, this message is concluding, last-given. . . ."

ABD AL-RAHMAN ROSELER.

"There is no support for the view (in the Bible) that Jesus was the Son of God who came to redeem the world from sin. He was first a messenger of God who came to modify the Torah — he came only for the Jews. . . .

"The people are falling away from the Church. They are looking for something else to take its place. Islam would appeal to their powers of reason, but, if this opportunity to show them the truths of Islam is disregarded, the people will be lost again for a long time. . . .

"Had this truth, as revealed through the Qur'án, been accepted at the time of its revelation, it would have saved nearly two thousand years of darkness and hard labour of the Christian thinkers who have at last started to see the light."

"My conversion and subsequent acceptance of Islam was no sudden change; rather was it a gradual development of the realization of the truth of the Qur'án, and yet my beliefs are little changed.

"That, in itself, may sound a contradiction, but that is not so, for it is partly this that has convinced me of that truth. Finding in Islam the same God, and the same beliefs and golden rules for life in which in my heart of hearts I had always believed, but never found in anything before, only makes me that much more certain that this is the right path to take.

"I was a Christian before. But was I a Christian? Not totally, but some of its teachings I found to be good and right, so utilizing these teachings and adding some of my own which conscience told me were right, I found God in my own way, later to find Him in Islam.

"It is difficult to disregard the Christian teaching of the Divinity of Jesus Christ when one has been taught that from childhood. I, like most others, accepted it as right without giving it another thought, but one thing always disturbed me. The Church taught the Love of God and His Great Mercy for His children. Then why I asked myself, did we have to appease God by the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross, which atoned for the sins of mankind? No, these two things were to me contradictory, and once again I turned to Islam to see what it had to say on this point.

"And so to Islam.

"I was greatly impressed by the seriousness with which Muslims take their religion, so much so that I determined to learn more of it. This I did by the personal teaching of one person, and later with the help of Islamic literature.

"I like to think it was the Will of God which guided me to Islam, thus spreading the Word a little further. Perhaps I, too, will be instrumental in spreading it much further; for now I have the inner peace which only comes with true knowledge of God, and this I believe must be passed on to so many others.

"One evening recently I was in 'poetic mood', and penned down a few lines that could hardly be called poetry, but here they are:

A CONVERT

'What sorrow lay within my heart
Before the Lord to me did come!
What inner tumult was to start
To show itself on outer dome?

'But then came peace. Oh! blessed peace
Descended from my God above,
That gave my life another lease,
And how did come? Why, 'twas with love.

'A love that brought the greatest truth,
The Word of God — that came to show
To man the way that is right and good,
What glory and what truth doth flow!

'The truth that was on other lips
Is now mine own to love and know —
The Glorious Qur'án, for this it is,
In Islam — onward — I must go'."

S. E. S. COHEN.

اَلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوْبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ ؕ
اَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوْبُ

"Those who believe and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of God. Now surely in God's remembrance do hearts find rest or peace" (The Qur'án, 13 : 27-28).

Joan Fatima Dansken (England).

"The Christian dogma and superstition does not appeal to me, and the tenets of Islam are practical and reasonable."

JOAN FATIMA DANSKEN.

(*The Islamic Review*, October 1929.)

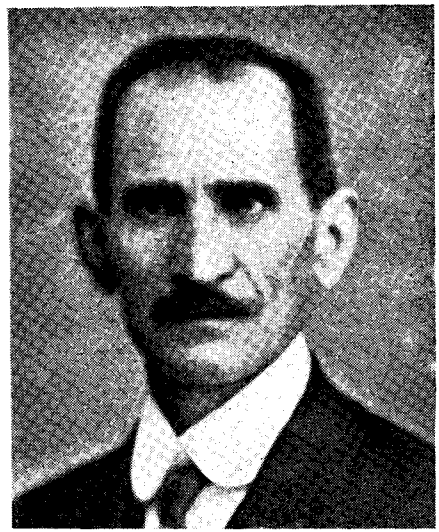
"To me Islam is a universal religion, as Islam disregards political, geographical and social divisions, thus creating a mutual understanding among its adherents. Islam is a religion of social equality and through its democratic principles it permits its followers to achieve many objects which otherwise would not be procured.

"I have had the great pleasure of dining with Muslims and I have observed that the opulent and the indigent Muslims dine together, and the Muslim austerity of equality again rules.

"In no other religious sect have I ever observed such equality, courtesy, and above all fraternal environment. . . .

"On numerous occasions I have defended the Muslim Arabs against vilifying remarks. And so long as the omnipotent Jehovah grants me the privilege of uttering a few words I shall defend Islam and the son of Abdullah and Aminah."

SOL PHILIPS (England).



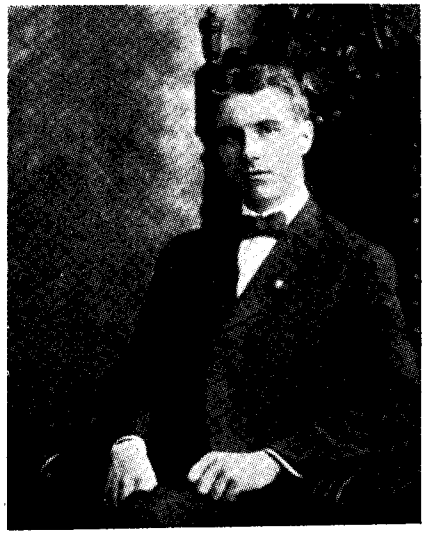
Prof. 'Abdul Ahad Dawud (Iran).

"My conversion to Islam cannot be attributed to any cause other than the gracious direction of Almighty God. Without this Divine guidance, all learning, searching and other efforts to find the truth may even lead one astray. The moment I believed in the Absolute Unity of God, His Holy Apostle Muhammad became the pattern of my conduct and behaviour."

(Prof.) 'ABDUL AHAD DAWUD, B.D., formerly the Reverend David Benjamin Keldani, B.D.

"In Islam I have found the elements which make for stability. Its simplicity, its freedom from ritual, its toleration of science, philosophy and political forms of government, its lack of social distinctions and racial antipathies, its freedom from mysteries, reserved entirely for the select few or the wealthy and socially influential, and its possibilities for the future are wider than those contemplated by any other of the modern forms of faith, make it, when rightly understood, the best expression which I have yet found for my social, political and religious ideals."

DAVID OMAR NICHOLSON (Scotland).



Omar Ernest C. Clark (U.S.A.).

" Rationality and democracy in Islam appeal to me very much."

OMAR ERNEST C. CLARK.

(*The Islamic Review*, June 1929.)

" I think one of the happiest moments of my life was experienced on the 22nd of August 1919.

" It was on this very memorable day that I became a Muslim. I had been seriously contemplating the step for nearly a year, during which time I made a fair study of Islam.

" The part which first became embedded in my mind was the plain straightforwardness and logical footing on which this great religion has its basis.

" Oft of an evening I have been riding along the waterways in Egypt and have stood and admired the simple way in which the people worship : moreover, one is struck with the devotion of the individual who realizes he is in direct communication with God.

" Eventually I found I was unable to continue to follow the doctrines in which I had been brought up."

JALAL-UD-DIN DAVIDSON (England).

(Dr.) Ali Selman Benoist (France).

" As Doctor of Medicine, and descendant of a French Catholic family, the very choice of my profession has given me a solid scientific culture which had prepared me very little for a mystic life. Not that I did not believe in God, but that the dogmas and rites of Christianity in general and of Catholicism in particular never permitted me to feel His presence. Thus my unitary sentiment for God forbade my accepting the dogma of the Trinity, and consequently of the Divinity of Jesus Christ.

" Without yet knowing Islam, I was already believing in the first part of the *Kalima, La ilaha illa 'l-Lah* (There is but one God), and in the 112th chapter of the Qur'án :

> ' Say : He, the God, is one ; God is an absolute unity ; He never begot, nor was He begotten ; and there is none equal to Him.'

" So, it was first of all for metaphysical reasons that I adhered to Islam. Other reasons, too, prompted me to do that. For instance, my refusal to accept Catholic priests, who, more or less, claim to possess the power of forgiving, on behalf of God, the sins of men. Further, I could never admit the Catholic rite of Communion, by means of the host (or holy bread), representing the body of Jesus Christ, a rite which seems to me to belong to totemistic practices of primitive peoples, where the body of the ancestral totem, the taboo of the living ones, had to be consumed after his death, in

order to assimilate his personality. Another point which moved me from Christianity was the absolute silence which it maintains regarding bodily cleanliness, particularly before prayers, which has always seemed to me to be an outrage against God. For if He has given us a soul, He has also given us a body, which we have no right to neglect. The same silence could be observed, and this time mixed with hostility, with regard to the physiological life of the human being, whereas on this point Islam seemed to me to be the only religion in accord with human nature.

"The essential and definite element of my conversion to Islam was the Qur'án. I began to study it, before my conversion, with the critical spirit of a Western intellectual, and I owe much to the magnificent work of Mr. Malek Bennabi, entitled *Le Phénomène Coranique*, which convinced me of its being divinely revealed. There are certain pages, particularly the chapter which Mr. Bennabi entitles "Coincidences", where he demonstrates that the text of certain verses of this book, the Qur'án, revealed thirteen centuries ago, teach exactly the same notions as the most modern scientific researches do. This definitely convinced me, and converted me to the second part of the *Kalima, 'Muhammad al-Rasul 'l-Lah'* (Muhammad is the Messenger of God).

"This was my reason for presenting myself on 20th February 1953 at the mosque in Paris, where I declared my faith in Islam and was registered there as a Muslim by the Mufti of the Paris Mosque, and was given the Islamic name of 'Ali Selman.

"I am very happy in my new faith, and proclaim once again, 'I bear witness that there is but one God, and I bear witness that Muhammad is God's servant and messenger'."

(Dr.) ALI SELMAN BENOIST.

(The Islamic Review, May 1954.)

"I was born into a very religious family and grew up to be a Church worker. . . . I began to notice many things that I could not agree with . . . there was something I longed for and could not find, and I began to lose interest in my Church work.

"I had noticed for a number of years the sincerity of the followers of Islam who lived in my home town, and I began to make enquiries and to read all the literature I could obtain about what I then knew as the Muhammadan religion. All I need say is that I found what I was craving for and I also found out how wrongly I had been taught about this wonderful religion. Since embracing Islam my outlook on life has changed."

JAMES MURCHIE (England).

P. A. Hanback (England).

"I have studied many different religious faiths, but Islamic teaching impresses me more than any; for it teaches that no man is so great as God, our Creator; while other faiths have saints, people born of flesh, whom they worship or pray to . . . and the Bible has been changed and rechanged so often to suit the Christian Roman Church that it is hard to believe in its truthfulness."

P. A. HANBACK.

(*The Islamic Review*, November 1928.)

"In my enthusiasm for Islam, I began to study all religions, from the most ancient to those of the present day, comparing each with the other, and subjecting them to a very close criticism, and little by little I became convinced that the Muslim worship was the true religion, and that the Holy Qur'án contained what every soul mostly requires for its spiritual elevation. How beautiful and simple is a mosque, and how practical must be a pilgrimage to Mecca, where one cannot distinguish rich from poor, they all being equal before the face of God. . . . I became more and more convinced that no other worship could be compared with the Muslim religion."

COUNT EDWARD GIOJA (Italy).

Mohammad Mustapha Colley (Gambia).

" Having been brought up from childhood to manhood in Christianity, and being familiar with all the elements of that religion, I feel convinced that in Islam there are all-important points which indicate that Christianity remains incomplete. I became fully convinced when day after day I watched Muslims at prayer, and observed the clean way in which they confront their Maker. I became attracted and kept reading books . . . which finally have brought about my conversion to the faith of the last Holy Prophet Muhammad."

MOHAMMAD MUSTAPHA COLLEY.

(*The Islamic Review,* November-December 1938.)

" The Church of England, unfortunately, is too narrow and bigoted, and the whole thing seems to lack philosophy, and it does not seem altogether a simple faith. . . . Islamic faith is the most devout . . . carrying a vast amount of truth and knowledge with it."

EILEEN RAHIMA LACEY (England).

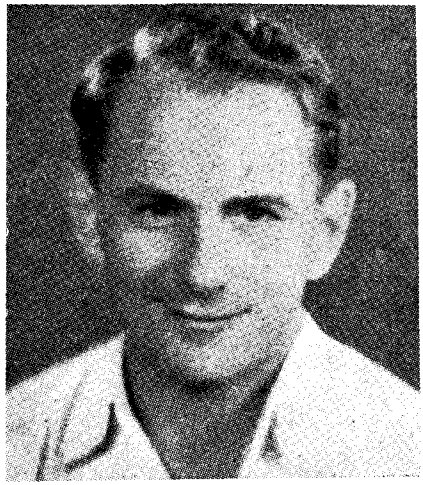
(*The Islamic Review,* June 1926.)

T. H. McBarklie (Irish Free State).

"I was brought up in the Protestant faith, and at a very early age I began to find the teachings of Christianity unsatisfactory. . . . By the time I had left school and gone to the university this suspicion had become a certainty; the Christian Church, as I had been shown it, meant little or nothing to me . . . I almost despaired of finding an established creed which would include all ideas I had formulated, and for a long time I tried to satisfy myself with vague beliefs of my own. One day I chanced on a copy of *Islam and Civilization,* by Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din. As I read it I realized that nearly all my beliefs were included in the doctrine the little volume expounded.

"The broad outlook of Islam as opposed to the intolerance of the Christian sects, the learning and culture of the Islamic countries in the Middle Ages compared with the ignorance and superstition of other lands at that time, the logical theory of compensation as against the Christian idea of atonement, were a few of the points that first struck me. Later, I came to realize that here was a faith broad as humanity itself, ready for the guidance of rich and poor, alike and able to break down all barriers of creed and colour."

T. H. McBARKLIE.



Edward Alcock (England).

". . . I was born and brought up in the Christian faith, the religion of my family, and as a boy I received my education at an English Public School, later passing on to the university. At school it was compulsory to attend chapel (the Church of England) twice daily during term time. . . .

"After leaving school and the university I saw service in the Royal Navy during the war years, and it was probably the very nature of my work during the period 1942-46 that did give me, even during the stresses and strains of the day, an opportunity, strange as it may seem, to think on things. As a submariner, I felt very close to my Creator; we had long days of waiting for action, alternated by minutes packed with action, when one's very life was in His hands. I came through these ordeals unharmed, thankful, but, more than ever, I felt a spiritual confusion going on in my mind. I could not reconcile my Christian upbringing and teachings with the long hand of truth and right, which had guarded and guided me during those anxious times. I was still professedly Christian, probably more out of loyalty to my parents and school rather than by conviction. One might say I was a Christian by chance and convenience. I could obtain no satisfaction or contentment, and I felt that the need was paramount to seek out the unknown and find the true Way of Life, the way to God.

"Was it, therefore, so very coincidental that I succeeded in obtaining employment after my war service in Malaya, whose Malay

inhabitants subscribe to the Faith of Islam? The long hand of truth was surely leading me to the goal. I soon settled down there, taking note and learning the ways and customs of the people around me. I was deeply impressed, not only by their simplicity and piety, but by their sincere brotherliness and kindness towards one another. The more I saw of them, the more deeply impressed was I by their obvious happiness in their surrender to God—and their friendliness towards me, a stranger, who did not belong to their faith. Here was no racial discrimination or prejudice. They had found a happiness and a peace in their religion which could not be harmed or affected by the materialistic worries of the day. All roads led to God. It was this which encouraged me to learn all about Islam, and in so doing I knew instinctively that I was about to seek that compelling force which had been drawing me nigh to surrender to His Will and His Way for the past few years.

"To learn more, I studied many books and literature on Islam, the life of the Prophet Muhammad, histories, and the Holy Qur'án itself. . . .

"I have found at last the true light and uplift, the spiritual contentment which only complete submission to the One and Only God can bring. Thus I decided to embrace Islam, and with the help of God, to become a good Muslim.

"It is my sincere hope and prayer that, with God's help and mercy, I shall be permitted to carry on my service to Him following in the example set before us by the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him !).

EDWARD ALCOCK.

(*The Islamic Review*, February 1951.)

"In Islam there is tolerance and an acknowledgment of universal brotherhood. So, I may say that I have accepted Islam because it fits in so well with my own ideas about God and His wonderful plan. It is the only faith I really can understand. Indeed, such is its simplicity and beauty that even a little child can understand it."

AMINA LE FLEMING (England).

(*The Islamic Review*, October 1935.)

Salim R. de Grey (England).

" I had been brought up in the Christian faith. I had been confirmed, and attended Holy Communion. . . . Imagine, if you can, my delight when I discovered that everything I read about Islam coincided with my own views and that the teachings of our Prophet (God bless him and keep him !) answered all my questions. *Surah* after *Surah* of the Holy Qur'án revealed to me the truth, and I gave thanks to God that He had, in His mercy, accepted my surrender."

SALIM R. de GREY.

" Islam has given me a very practical method of breaking down the barrier of materialism in one of the Five Pillars of Faith, namely prayer. The Muslim prayer keeps me constantly aware of my duty to God, to my soul, and to my fellow-creatures. Since becoming a Muslim I have done my best to observe the obligatory times of prayer, if only to offer up a prayer mentally during the humdrum of the business day, and I have found how infinitely nearer God is to me than I have felt heretofore."

KHALID D'ERLANGER REMRAF (England).

(Mrs.) Amina Mosler (Germany).

" One day, in the year 1928, my son with tears in his eyes said : 'I do not want to remain a Christian any longer ; I want to be a Muslim ; and you, too, my mother, should join this new faith with me. That was the first time I felt that I had to link myself with Islam. Years passed before I came in contact with Dr. S. M. 'Abdullah, the Imam of the Berlin Mosque, who introduced me to Islam. I came to recognize that Islam was the true religion for me. Belief in the Trinity of the Christian faith was impossible for me even at my young age of twenty. After studying Islam I also rejected confession, the holiness and recognition of the supreme power of the Pope, baptism, etc., and thus I became a Muslim.

" My ancestors were all sincere believers and pious persons. I was brought up in a convent and hence I inherited a religious attitude towards life. This demanded that I should associate myself with one religious system or the other. I was indeed very fortunate and comforted as I decided to join the religion of Islam.

" Today I am a very happy grandmother, because I can claim that even my grandchild is a born Muslim.

" God guides whom He pleases to the right path.' "

AMINA MOSLER,

A. Vaughan-Spruce (England).

"Islam teaches self-reliance without the aid of priesthood, and so helps us to find ourselves. It is that human touch and that self-reliance which is so much needed today to cement our civilization and our commercial life, bringing all races together in one great brotherhood in the cause of humanity."

A. VAUGHAN-SPRUCE.

(*The Islamic Review*, September 1928.)

"I diligently studied Islam and compared its teachings with those formerly taught me, and finally arrived at the blessed conclusion that the religion preached by the Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of God be upon him!) is the only one which stands out prominently, as connotative of the marvellous grandeur of God and one which satisfies the spiritual craving of the intellectual humanity."

ABU BAKR BEAUMONT-BENJAMIN (Trinidad).

W. B. Bashyr-Pickard (England).

" Bismillahi 'r-Rahmani 'r-Raheem

" Having been born in Islam (' Every child is born with a disposition towards the natural religion of obedience [i.e. Islam]. It is the parents who make him a Jew, a Christian or a Magian ' — a saying of Muhammad), it was a good many years before I realized this fact. At school and college I was occupied, perhaps too intensely, with the affairs and demands of the passing moment. I do not consider my career of those days brilliant but it was progressive. Amid Christian surroundings I was taught the good life, and the thought of God and of worship and of righteousness was pleasant to me. If I worshipped anything it was nobility and courage. Coming down from Cambridge, I went to Central Africa, having obtained an appointment in the administration of the Uganda Protectorate. There I had an interesting and exciting existence beyond what, from England, I had ever dreamt, and was compelled by circumstances to live amongst the black brotherhood of humanity, to whom I may say I became endearingly attached by reason of their simple joyous outlook upon life. The East had always attracted me. At Cambridge I read the *Arabian Nights.* Alone in Africa I read the *Arabian Nights,* and the wild roaming existence I passed in the Uganda Pro-

tectorate did not make the East less dear to me. Then upon my placid life broke in the First World War. I hastened homewards to Europe. My health broke down. Recovering, I applied for a commission in the Army, but on health grounds this was denied me. I therefore cut losses and enlisted in the Yeomanry managing somehow or other to pass the doctors and, to my relief, donned uniform as a trooper. Serving then in France on the Western Front, I took part in the battle of the Somme in 1917, where I was wounded and made prisoner of war. I travelled through Belgium to Germany where I was lodged in hospital. In Germany I saw much of the sufferings of stricken humanity, especially Russians decimated by dysentery. I came to the outskirts of starvation. My wound (shattered right arm) did not heal quickly and I was useless to the Germans. I was therefore sent to Switzerland for hospital treatment and operation. I well remember how dear even in those days was the thought of the Qur'án to me. In Germany I had written home for a copy of Sale's *Koran* to be sent out to me. In later years I learnt that this had been sent but it never reached me. In Switzerland after operation to arm and leg my health recovered. I was able to go out and about. I purchased a copy of Savary's French translation of the Qur'án (this today is one of my dearest possessions). Therein I delighted with a great delight. It was as if a ray of eternal truth shone down with blessedness upon me. My right hand still being useless, I practised writing the Qur'án with my left hand. My attachment to the Qur'án is further evidenced when I say that one of the most vivid and cherished recollections I had of the *Arabian Nights* was that of the youth discovered alive alone in the city of the dead, seated reading the Qur'án, oblivious to his surroundings. In those days in Switzerland I was veritably *résigné à la volonté de Dieu* (Muslim). After the signing of the Armistice I returned to London in December 1918 and some two or three years later, in 1921, I took up a course of literary study at London University. One of the subjects I chose was Arabic, lectures in which I attended at King's College. Here it was that one day my professor in Arabic (the late Mr. Belshah of Iraq) in the course of our study of Arabic mentioned the Qur'án. "Whether you believe in it or not," he said, "you will find it a most interesting book and well worthy of study." "Oh, but I do believe in it," was my reply. This remark surprised and greatly interested my teacher in Arabic, who after a little talk invited me to accompany him to the London Prayer House at Notting Hill Gate. I did so and there I met the Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, of happy memory. After that I attended the Prayer House frequently and came to know more of the practice of Islam, until, on New Year's Day, 1922, I journeyed to Woking and there openly joined the Muslim Community.

"That is more than a quarter of a century ago. Since then I have lived a Muslim life in theory and practice to the extent of my ability. The power and wisdom and mercy of God are boundless. The fields of knowledge stretch out ever before us beyond the horizon. In our pilgrimage through life I feel assured that the only befitting garment we can wear is submission and upon our heads the headgear of praise and in our hearts love of the One Supreme."

"*Wa al-Hamdu li 'l-Lahi Rabbi 'l-Alameen*"

WILLIAM BURCHELL BASHYR PICKARD, B.A.(Cantab.), L.D.(Lond.), author of *Layla and Majnun, The Adventures of Alcassim,* and *A New World.*

(*The Islamic Review,* April 1922.)

"A man who towards middle age changes his religion may justly claim to have good reasons for an action of paramount importance in his life. . . .

"There are no distinctions in Islam. Muslims of all colours and nations come together without that Pharisaical pride from which even the Christian clergy are not free. Muslims, rich and poor, are distinguished by an implicit faith in God. The Prophet Muhammad taught us that material things are of little account and pointed the way to paradise. The Prophet lived a system of ethics which stands alone. It is the Divine message practically illustrated by one specially chosen.

"Muslims glory in the fact that nothing supernatural or of a miraculous nature attaches to their belief, and when I reflect on the simplicity of Islam and on Muslims' ever-present consciousness of human insignificance before God, I am proud to be a follower of the greatest prophet of all time."

A. KANE (England).

(*The Islamic Review,* October 1930.)

B. Davis (England).

"I was born in 1931 and at the age of six went to a boarding-school. I stayed there for seven years, when I left to go to the local County School. I was brought up a Methodist, then an Anglican and finally an Anglo-Catholic. All the time, however, I noticed that religion was detached from ordinary life like a best suit — only to be displayed on Sundays. I noticed, too, that Christianity was losing its grip, especially over the rising generation. Christianity seemed to be unable to deal with the present crisis. It tried to drug its adherents by means of incense, lights, coloured vestments, long litanies to the 'saints' and all the other trappings of Romanism. It did not try to concern itself with what went on outside the Church.

"It was on account of this that I turned to these two panaceas of the present day, Communism and Fascism.

"As a Communist I tried to think of the joys of a classless society, etc., but the constant stories of those who had 'escaped' (how can one escape from a free land?) from the 'new democracies' made me see that Communism was just the tool of would-be world rulers, the Russians. I then swung to the other extreme, Fascism. This doctrine promised everything to everybody and I tried to make myself hate people for their race or colour. It was only after some months as one of Mosley's supporters that I thought of the last war and all the beatings, etc., done by the Nazis, and I tried to

push them out of my mind. I was never happy as a Fascist but it seemed to me the only solution to our difficulties.

"It was whilst in this frame of mind that I saw a copy of *The Islamic Review* on a bookstall. I don't know what made me pay two shillings and sixpence for a magazine which expressed doctrines that I had been told by Christians, Communists and Fascists were only believed by cut-throats and bandits and were not worth tuppence. I did buy it, however, and I read and reread it. Here I found all that was good in Christianity, Communism and all the other 'isms' with a bit more as well.

"I instantly took out a year's subscriptions and a few months later I became a Muslim. Since that day I have been very happy in my new faith.

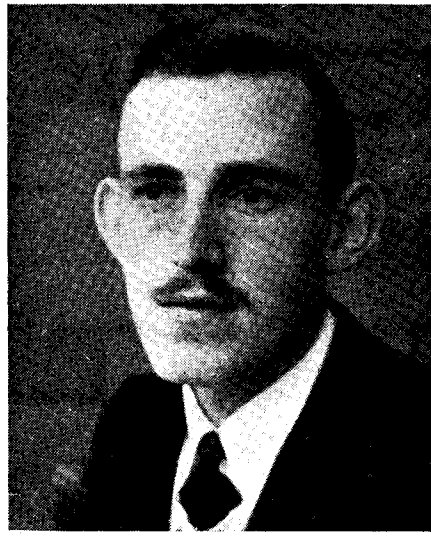
"I hope to learn Arabic, if and when I get to the university. At the present moment, however, I am studying Latin, French and Spanish."

B. DAVIS.

(*The Islamic Review*, November 1949.)

"I was born in a Tartar village in Russia, where my father, a Roman Catholic Pole and an exile from Poland, was a doctor. He married a woman who became a Christian in order to marry him, as in old Russia marriages between Christians and non-Christians were not allowed. My mother never went to church or took part in any religious service elsewhere, and my earliest recollections are of her whispering to herself the Muslim prayers whenever she was alone. I grew up in the shadow of a mosque and all my childhood memories are bound up with the call of the *Muezzin*, the Tartars saying their prayers at home and in the fields, and the whole sober, clean and decent life of the Muslim community, which I subconsciously compared with the drunkenness, brutality and filth of the neighbouring non-Muslim villages. . . . How could it (Christianity) stand in comparison with the pure logic of Islam — submission to the will of God and striving towards His perfection? There (Islam) has not the theological dogmas and magical formulae for salvation, but a perfect guidance and a moral code for the whole conduct of life, which does not demand denying the evidence of one's reason, nor the violation of one's natural feelings."

SAEEDA NAMIER (Poland).



Muhammad Aman Hobohm (Germany).

" Why do Westerners embrace Islam? There are various reasons. In the first place, truth always has its force. The basic tenets of Islam are so rational, so natural and so appealing that an honest truth seeker cannot help being impressed by them. To take, for example, the belief in monotheism. How it raises the dignity of man and how it frees us from the grip of superstition ! How naturally it leads to the equality of men, for all have been created by the same God and all are servants of the same Lord. For the Germans, in particular, the belief in God is a source of inspiration, a source of fearless courage and a source of the feeling of security.

" Then the idea of a life after death turns the tables. Life in this world is no more the main objective and much energy is devoted to the betterment of the Hereafter. The faith in the day of judgement automatically spurs a man to give up misdeeds, for good deeds alone can ensure eternal salvation, although the wrong deeds may prosper here for a limited time. The belief that none can escape the consequences of the judgement of a just, impartial and omniscient Lord makes one think twice before one does anything wrong — and surely this internal check is more effective than the most efficient police in the world.

" Another thing that attracts foreigners to Islam is its emphasis on tolerance. Then the daily prayers teach us punctuality and the

one month of fasting enables one to exercise self-control over oneself and without doubt punctuality and self-discipline are two of the most important attributes of a good man and a great man.

"Now comes the real achievement of Islam. It is the only ideology which has succeeded in instilling in its followers the spirit of observing the ethical and moral limitations without external compulsion. For a Muslim knows that, wherever he is, he is being observed by God. This belief keeps him away from sin. As man is naturally inclined towards goodness, Islam also offers peace of mind and heart — and this is what is totally absent from the Western society.

"I have lived under different systems of life and have had the opportunity of studying various ideologies, but have come to the conclusion that none is as perfect as Islam.

"Communism has its attractions, so have democracy and Nazism. But none has got a complete code of a noble life. Only Islam has it, and that is why good men embrace it.

"Islam is not theoretical — it is practical. Islam is not a departmental affair — it means a complete submission to the will of God."

MUHAMMAD AMAN HOBOHM,
Sometime Imam of the Berlin Mosque.

"I cannot understand why Islam should be misrepresented as a belief full of superstition. . . . I consider myself very fortunate in having found something . . . reasonable."

HALIMA MARGUERITE LEE (England).

(*The Islamic Review*, August 1928.)

Togo Tzushima (British of Japanese extraction).

" Islam appeals to the conscience and reason, and sets man above sectarian or racial prejudice. It reforms human character by instilling into man the cosmopolitan creed of God and nature — service of mankind."

TOGO TZUSHIMA.

(*The Islamic Review,* November 1927.)

". . . it seemed to me then, and it seems to me still, that Islam does not set for the believers those problems which have been the cause of so many Europeans abandoning all faith, while, on the other hand, many things in Islam can only be explained on the assumption of its truth."

'ABDUL QADIR PICKARD (England).

Denis Warrington-Fry (Australia).

" Islam came to me as the spring comes to the cold earth after dark winter. It has warmed my soul and clothed me in its beautiful teachings. How clear and fresh are the teachings of Islam and how logical ! ' There is but One God and Muhammad is His Prophet.' Can there be anything more sublime than this ? None of the mysterious ' The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost ' ritual, which, I suppose, is quite awe-inspiring, but is hardly satisfactory to a keen mind. Islam is so modern, so applicable to the world today. Take, for instance, the teachings of the Equality of Man, which is taught also in the Christian churches but which with them has no meaning with their popes and archbishops and bishops, and so on, all striving for power and using God's name as an excuse. How different is Islam from this ! How much more sincere are the teachings of Muhammad as revealed to him by God !

DENIS WARRINGTON-FRY.

(*The Islamic Review*, October 1951.)

J. C. A. Perara (Ceylon).

"I studied the religion of Islam and in this I find the salvation offered to men and women alike, without intercession of priests."

J. C. A. PERARA.

(*The Islamic Review*, July 1927.)

"Islam has taught me the habit of prayer and belief in the one and only God (Allah). I have now a far happier outlook on life than heretofore. Thus Islam became my only choice, my spirit having guided me to the one true religion."

HALIMA MARIE MATTHEWS (England).

(*The Islamic Review*, July 1930.)

Teresa Gordon (England).

" In Islam we need no intercession, for our God is the God of mercy and compassion. We are not born in sin, but come into the world with a soul as pure and as white as the driven snow, and we all have the chance of entering the Kingdom of Heaven, and not, as the Christian faith says, ' Unless ye are baptised ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven '."

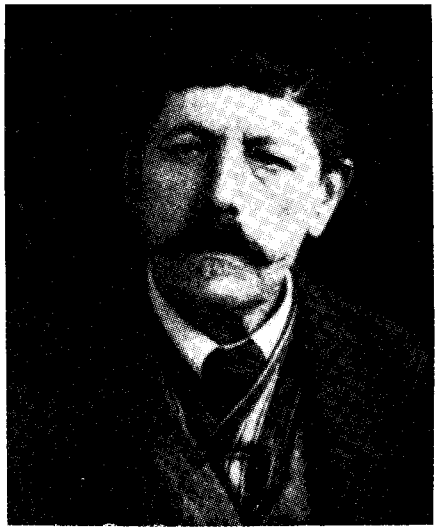
TERESA GORDON.

" Islam seems to heal many of the sore points of my past Christian belief and I feel relieved to know of the existence of a spiritual common sense."

H. H. O.

فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ۝ إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ۝

" Surely with difficulty is ease,
" With difficulty is surely ease " (The Qur'án, 94 : 6-7).



Ahmad A. Allan (England).

"Of recent years I have studied the Qur'án a great deal . . . therein is a 'plain direction' for everyone; it is logic and no mysticism. The best commentary of the Qur'án is — it requires none. Read it with an unbiased mind all ye who wish for instruction."

AHMAD A. ALLAN.

"That is what I admire about Islam. It does not confine itself to any particular nationality."

R. F. EDWARDS (England).

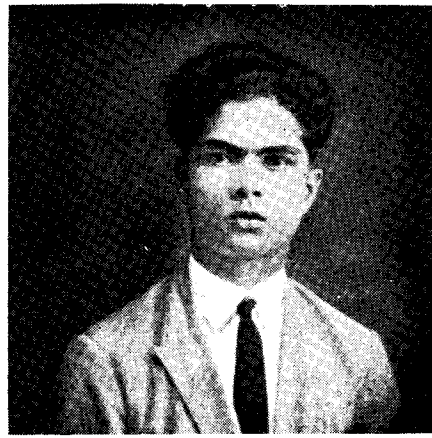
J. L. Ch. Van Beetem (England).

" My parents were strict Catholics, and they brought me up a staunch Catholic, marking me out for the priesthood. But fate would have it otherwise, and my footsteps took me to the country of Java, in the Far East, to observe with my own eyes how dearly and faithfully Muslims held their faith. This was an eye-opener for me ; for I learnt that the Muslims, as dinned by the Christian priestcraft into our ears, are anything but heathens, and Islam, which they misrepresented so much, is not a religion with hateful practices. . . . After thoroughly studying the Holy Qur'án I came to the realization that Islam had always been my religion. . . . Now I realize that my place is among my Muslim brothers to glorify God for bringing salvation to mankind."

J. L. CH. VAN BEETEM.

وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ شَآءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَّمَنْ شَآءَ فَلْيَكْفُرْ

" And say : The Truth is from your Lord ; so let him who please believe, and let him who please disbelieve " (The Qur'án, 18 : 29).



Mumin Abdur Razzaque Selliah (Ceylon).

"At one time I really held Islam in abhorrence. I had no Muslim friends, for Islam was so repulsive to me that I did not want even to associate with its adherents. Little did I dream that the late Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din's books on Islam would make a new man of me. . . . I began to love Islam because of its straight and non-mysterious path. It is clean and simple, yet so full of deep studies that I soon felt the inevitable was drawing nigh.

"The Holy Qur'án, some passages of which I read, simply struck me with wonder, for I had the idea that there was nothing to rival the Bible. I found, however, that I was hopelessly mistaken in this. Indeed, the Holy Qur'án is so full of truths, and its teachings so practical and free from dogmatic tenets and mysteries, that I daily drifted into the religion of 'Peace and Love', which Islam certainly is.

"The Muslim brotherhood, also, did not pass me unnoticed. If one wants to see the true realization of 'love thy neighbour as thyself', it can only be found in the Muslim brotherhood, the greatest and truest union of people the world has ever seen. . . .

"What convinced me further was that Islam was not dogmatic. It is ideal and practical, rational and modern. It is also ideal in its conception of the One God and in its spirituality. Practical in its tenets, modern and rational in outlook, it is the one religion for all humanity."

MUMIN ABDUR RAZZAQUE SELLIAH.

(The Islamic Review, August 1934.)

Ahmed A. C. Hammond (England).

"I have for years been drawn towards Islam, which has always appeared so open and devout . . ."

AHMED A. C. HAMMOND.

(*The Islamic Review*, May 1934.)

اَلْيَوْمَ اَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِيْنَكُمْ

وَاَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِيْ وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْاِسْلَامَ دِيْنًا

"This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour to you and chosen for you Islam as a religion" (The Qur'án, 5 : 3).

Lady Evelyn Zeinab Cobbold (England).

"I am often asked when and why I became a Muslim. I can only reply that I do not know the precise moment when the truth of Islam dawned upon me. It seems that I have always been a Muslim. This is not so strange when one remembers that Islam is the natural religion that a child left to itself would develop. Indeed, as a Western critic once described it, 'Islam is the religion of common sense . . .'

"The more I read and the more I studied, the more convinced I became that Islam was the most practical religion, and the one most calculated to solve the world's many perplexing problems, and to bring to humanity peace and happiness. Since then I have never wavered in my belief that there is but one God; that Moses, Jesus, Muhammad and others were prophets, divinely inspired, that to every nation God has sent an apostle, that we are not born in sin, and that we do not need any redemption, that we do not need anyone to intercede between us and God, Whom we can approach at all times, and that no one can intercede for us, not even Muhammad or Jesus, and that our salvation depends entirely on ourselves and our actions.

"The word 'Islam' means surrender to God. It also means peace. A Muslim is one who is 'in harmony with the decrees of the author of this world', one who has made his peace with God and His creatures.

"Islam is based on two fundamental truths, on the Oneness of God and on the Brotherhood of Man, and is entirely free from any encumbrances of theological dogma. Above everything else it is a positive faith.

"The influence of the Hadj cannot be exaggerated. To be a member of that huge congregation gathered together from the four corners of the earth, on this sacred occasion and on this sacred spot, and to join with them in all humility in the glorification of God, is to have one's consciousness impressed by the full significance of the Islamic ideal, is to be privileged to participate in one of the most soul-inspiring experiences that have ever been granted to human beings. To visit the birthplace of Islam, to tread the sacred ground hallowed by the memories of Muhammad's long toil and sufferings in his struggle to call erring humanity back to God, is to re-live those glorious years of sacrifice and martyrdom, is to have one's soul kindled by that celestial fire which lighted up the whole earth. But this is not all. The Hadj above everything else makes for unity among Muslims. If there is anything that unifies the scattered forces of Islam and imbues them with mutual sympathy it is the pilgrimage. It provides them with a central point to which they rally from all corners of the earth. It creates for them annually an occasion to meet, and know one another, to exchange views and compare experiences and unite their various efforts to the common good. Distances are annihilated. Differences of sect are set aside. Divergences of race and colour cease to exist in this fraternity of faith that unites all Muslims in one great brotherhood and makes them conscious of the glorious heritage that is theirs. Then, when the religious duties are over, merchants from all lands discuss trade and commerce and transact business with each other, theologians and jurists discuss questions of religion and jurisprudence, scientists the latest advances in science, men of letters literature, financiers problems of finance, politicians and statesmen questions of national and international politics. The institution of Hadj does not represent to the Muslims merely a sacred institution, but also a League of Nations, an International Academy of Art and Science, and an International Chamber of Commerce all in one."—*Pilgrimage to Mecca,* by Lady Evelyn Cobbold, London 1934. Probably the first Englishwoman to have the distinction of performing the pilgrimage to Mecca.

LADY EVELYN ZEINAB COBBOLD.

(*The Islamic Review,* January 1935.)

R. Kennedy (England).

"I joined the Muslim faith as a result of my being greatly impressed by the large amount of sound and practical good sense contained in its tenets."

R. KENNEDY.

(*The Islamic Review*, September 1927.)

"I have found in Islam a religion that is compelling in its simplicity. My early thoughts of God did not inspire reverence so much as fear; the 'Wrath of God' seemed more real than 'His Mercy'. What we think of God moulds our very actions. Islam gives me a God worthy of worship and an inspiration to follow."

AMINEH BROWNE (England).

Mr. and Mrs. G. Pettman (England).

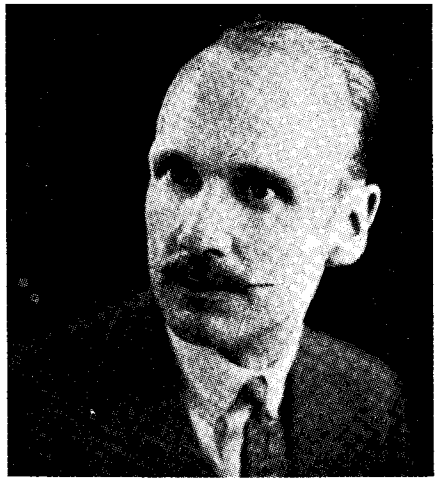
"We think that the teachings of the Christian Church are too dogmatic. . . . However noble a life you may lead, yet if you 'don't' agree, you are doomed for ever The simple beauty of Islam has brought us peace and understanding and we are quite happy."

Mr. and Mrs. G. PETTMAN.

(*The Islamic Review*, October 1927.)

أَلَآ إِنَّ أَوْلِيَآءَ ٱللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ۝
ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَكَانُوا۟ يَتَّقُونَ ۝ لَهُمُ ٱلْبُشْرَىٰ
فِى ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنْيَا وَفِى ٱلْءَاخِرَةِ

"Now surely the friends of God, they have no fear nor do they grieve. Those who believe and keep their duty. For them is good news in this world's life and in the Hereafter" (The Qur'án, 10 : 62-64).



Walter H. Williams (England).

"I was brought up from early childhood in an atmosphere of religion, as it was intended that I should ultimately enter the priesthood. . . . I devoted a considerable amount of my spare time to a thorough study of an English translation of the Holy Qur'án, and as I read over and over again certain of the words of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him!) I could not help but see that here at last in Islam I had found the true faith for which I had been seeking so long. And the knowledge gave me a totally different outlook on life, as if after groping endlessly about in dark and obscure by-ways I had at last come upon a bright and illuminated thoroughfare."

WALTER H. WILLIAMS.

(*The Islamic Review*, November 1960.)

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ ۖ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ
إِذَا دَعَانِ ۙ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ ۝

"And when My servants ask thee concerning Me, surely I am nigh. I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he calls on Me, so they should hear My call and believe in Me that they may walk in the right way" (The Qur'án, 2 : 186).

J. A. S. Plant (England).

"Although before my conversion I had always officially been a member of the Church of England ('C. of E.'), since leaving school I had used the term as a convenient designation whenever I had to fill up any of the many war forms in which 'Religion' was one of the questions to be answered. I was never a 'religious' type of person, and was very cynical of the dogmas and practices of the Christian religion. I felt that there must be some Supreme Being, but who he was I could not understand. I could not for a moment believe in the Church's conception of a 'Son of God', and the more I tried to understand the third one, the 'Holy Ghost', the more I was bewildered.

"At the end of 1945, however, when I was 19 years old, I was sent to Singapore with the Army. My particular staff job threw me into close contact with many of the local inhabitants, and it was not long before I began to be attracted and drawn to the Malays. Their apparent content and satisfaction with their simple way of life puzzled me and made me want to find out more about them. . . .

"Their good-natured tolerance of Christians, their generosity and hospitality, made me realize that this was due to the teachings of their religion, and that here were people who prayed because

they wanted to, and not because other people would talk if they didn't.

"I had only been in England for a few months after four years in Singapore when I suddenly realized that I was missing my familiar Islamic environment. In actual fact, therefore, I had been a Muslim at heart for at least two years before my return.

"And so in January 1950 I declared my belief in the oneness of God and in Muhammad as His last prophet. The spiritual uplift that this declaration has caused me has made me realize that Islam is the only true religion. I give my thanks to God for His mercy and benevolence in revealing to me the Light of Islam. And I hope that with His help and mercy I shall be able to live a life worthy of the benevolence and kindness that God grants to all members of His great brotherhood of Islam."

J. A. S. PLANT.

وَأَنْ لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَىٰ ۝ وَأَنَّ سَعْيَهُ سَوْفَ يُرَىٰ ۝
ثُمَّ يُجْزَاهُ الْجَزَاءَ الْأَوْفَىٰ ۝ وَأَنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ

"And that man can have nothing but what he strives for: and that his striving will soon be seen. Then he will be rewarded for it with the fullest reward; and that to thy Lord is the goal" (The Qur'án, 53: 39-42).

Omar Ali Dobson (England).

"The conception of Islam is as wide as humanity itself . . . and is not obscured by such pagan beliefs as Atonement, Redemption and Saviourship, the basis of the Christian religion. . . . I have read many books on Islam, and am passing them on to my friends so that they may glean some of the truth so long hidden from them."

OMAR ALI DOBSON.

(*The Islamic Review*, March 1929.)

قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَصَائِرُ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۖ فَمَنْ أَبْصَرَ فَلِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ عَمِيَ فَعَلَيْهَا

"Clear proofs have indeed come to you from your Lord; so whoever sees, it is for his own good; and whoever is blind, it is to his own harm" (The Qur'án, 6 : 105).

David Cowan (Scotland).

"It is with great pleasure that I take up my pen to tell you the process by which I came to adopt Islam.

"I had never been fully convinced about the Trinity even in the earlier years. I could not understand how the great God could beget a son on this earth of ours. . . . I felt strangely discontented and my affairs did not progress on account of this uneasiness. Then one day I entered the public library which receives *The Islamic Review* and picked up a copy to pass half an hour. As I read, I learned that here was the religion for which I was yearning. Since that day I have found that I have a greater assurance in life and have been a better man.

"What impresses me about the Sacred Book is the sublimity of the language and the constant testimony to the glory of God."

(al-Hajj) DAVID COWAN,
Lecturer in Arabic in the University of
London and author of *Modern Literary Arabic.*

Muhammad Alexander Russell Webb (U.S.A.).

"I have been requested to tell you why I — an American born in a country which is nominally Christian, and reared under the drippings, or more properly perhaps the drivellings of an orthodox Presbyterian pulpit — came to adopt the faith of Islam as my guide in life. I might reply promptly and truthfully that I adopted this religion because I found, after protracted study, that it was the best and only system adopted to the spiritual needs of humanity. . . . And here let me say that I was not born as some boys seem to be, with a fervently religious strain in my character. . . . When I reached the age of 20, and became practically my own master, I was so tired of the restraint and dullness of the Church, that I wandered away from it and never returned to it. . . . Fortunately I was of an enquiring turn of mind — I wanted a reason for everything, and I found that neither laymen nor clergy could give me any rational explanation of this faith, but either told me that such things were mysterious or that they were beyond my comprehension. . . . About eleven years ago I became interested in the study of Oriental religions. . . . I saw Mill and Locke, Kant, Hegel, Fichte, Huxley, and many other more or less learned writers discoursing with a

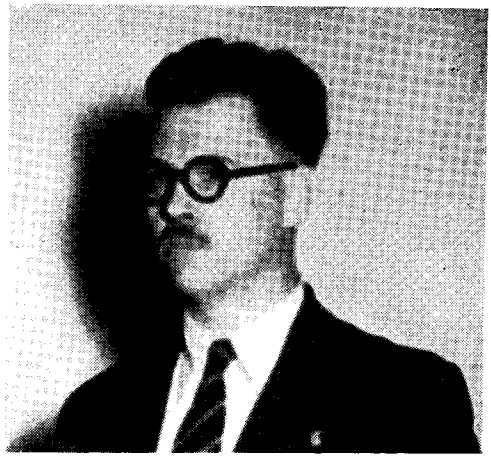
great show of wisdom concerning protoplasm and monads, and yet not one of them could tell me what the soul was or what became of it after death. . . . I have spoken so much of myself in order to show you that my adoption of Islam was not the result of misguided sentiment, blind credulity, or sudden emotional impulse, but it was born of earnest, honest, persistent, unprejudiced study and investigation and an intense desire to know the truth. . . .

"The essence of the true faith of Islam is resignation to the will of God and its corner stone is prayer. It teaches universal fraternity, universal love, and universal benevolence, and requires purity of mind, purity of action, purity of speech and perfect physical cleanliness. It is the simplest and most elevating form of religion known to man."

MUHAMMAD ALEXANDER RUSSELL WEBB (born 18th November 1846, died 1st October 1916), late of American Consular Service, at a lecture delivered on Islam at the Framji Cawasji Institute on Thursday 10th November 1892, as reported in his *Lectures on Islam*, Lahore 1893.

بَلَىٰ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ
مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

"Nay, whoever submits himself entirely to God and he is the doer of good (to others), he has his reward from his Lord, and there is no fear for such nor shall they grieve" (The Qur'án, 2 : 112).



Muhammad Al-Hashim Mahmud Cook (England).

"My very first contact with Islam occurred before the last world war, when I came to know some of the Arab students that attended the university in the city where I then lived. I cannot tell why, but I found that I was greatly attracted towards these men and I had a feeling of brotherliness towards them, so I started to learn their language. My interest soon led me to seek out books on the subject of Arab countries and the ways of their peoples, and one of these books was a volume entitled *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians,* by E. W. Lane. The author of this book made considerable mention of the Muslim religion and I found myself becoming greatly interested in the subject.

"Once I was in Cairo I had time to study the local people and I became very interested in them and made a large number of friends among the various classes of Egyptians. A thing that struck me very forcibly was the feeling of brotherhood that seemed to exist in the religious dealings that the people of Egypt had with one another, and the tolerance shown by them towards people of other religious beliefs.

"In England I had noticed that there was a very great deal of snobbishness and class-consciousness amongst the self-designated Christians, I think that 'church-goers' would be the better term for them, and in my own sect — which was Methodist — the people of the 'better sort' invariably sat in the prominent positions in the chapel and were always the ones who came in for most of the attention from the priest. In the mosques of Egypt there was none

of this attitude of 'I am better than you are'. All those who prayed in the mosque were obviously on the same level as soon as they had stepped across the threshold. The more I noticed this attitude, the more deeply I thought about the Muslim religion.

"At my own request my Egyptian friend started to take me to the Mosque, and being able to understand the Arabic language, I began to learn more and more about the teachings of the Qur'án and to realize more clearly the devoutness of the Muslims.

"Then came the day when Ibrahim asked me if I wanted to become a Muslim. I gave the matter considerable thought and in answer to some inner urge I replied in the affirmative. He then recited the words of the Muslim Declaration of Faith and asked me if I truly believed in them. I replied 'Yes,' and he then asked me to repeat the Declaration. Very solemnly I said, *'Ashhadu an la ilaha illa' 'l-Lah, wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan Rasul 'l-Lah'*, and when I had finished he said, quite simply, 'You are now a Muslim, my brother'."

MUHAMMAD AL-HASHIM MAHMUD COOK.

(*The Islamic Review*, September 1951.)

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي كَبَدٍ

"We have certainly created man to face difficulties" (The Qur'án, 90 : 4).

"REALIZATION OF THE DIVINE QUALITY OF THE HOLY QUR'AN AND THE PROPHET'S TEACHING FLOODED UPON ME CLEARLY"

"In approaching an account of my conversion to Islam, it would be as well to relate my personal experiences, both before and after coming into contact with its ideals. This is not so much to tell a story in itself as to show how the thought of thousands of other young Canadians and Americans is evolving and the opportunity that awaits an effective Islamic propaganda.

"I can remember thrilling as a very small child to the Christian interpretation of Jesus's life, but yet I cannot say that I was ever truly Christian of my own conviction. Instead of absorbing the pretty Biblical tales, I began wondering why so many in the world were 'heathen', why Jew and Christian differed on the same Bible, why the unbelievers were damned when the fault was not theirs, and also why they could practice goodness as well as the self-called 'higher' nations.

"I remember especially a missionary returned from India stating how the 'Mahometans' were so obdurate in adhering to their religion; that was my first encounter with Islam, and it roused an unconscious admiration in me for their steadfastness to their faith and a desire to know more about these wicked people. . . .

"In my first year course in Oriental literature, I had learned of the progression of human thought in its attempt to perfect its conception of God. Jesus had culminated the teaching of a Loving God. This idea had been lost in a cloud of liturgic doggerel and atavistic paganism; a beneficent, merciful deity had been obscured by an implacable overlord who could only be reached through an intercessor. Someone was needed to lead men back to the fountain of truth with its limpid main-stream of the One God.

"Europe was still in the semi-barbarism induced by the folk-wanderings and the extinction of classic culture by a narrow ecclesiasticism. The East was the logical centre of inspiration, and here Muhammad (God's blessings be on him!) arose six centuries

after Jesus, when Christopaganism was firmly entrenched in Europe and rational study, let alone inspiration, still nine centuries distant.

"At last I was able to accept Muhammad as a messenger of God: firstly, he was needed; secondly, my own conclusions had been independent and still coincided; and thirdly, apart from both the former, realization of the divine quality of the Holy Qur'án and the Prophet's teachings flooded upon me clearly.

"At the same time, I received and bought more and more literature upon Islam. An Indian philanthropist of Bombay, the late Mr. Q. A. Jairazbhoy, had sent me *What is Islam?* by H. W. Lovegrove, published by the Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust, Woking (this is perhaps the most practical exposition that I have read, and merits wide distribution). Later, he sent the Maulavi Muhammad 'Ali's excellent annotated edition of the Holy Qur'án, and various other books and tracts. At Montreal, I was able to procure considerable French literature on Islam, both for and against, and this helped broaden my vision. . . ."

THOMAS IRVING (Canada).

FROM ATHEISM TO ISLAM

"I was born in a Christian environment, baptised into the Church of England, and attended a Church school, where at a tender age I learned the story of Jesus as contained in the Gospels. It made a great emotional impression on me, as also did frequent visits to the church, the high altar with candles burning, the incense, the robed priests and the mysterious intoning of prayers. I suppose for those few years I was a fervent Christian. Then, with the increase of schooling, and being in constant contact with the Bible and everything Christian, I had the opportunity to think over what I had read and observed, practised and believed. Soon I began to be dissatisfied with many things.

"By the time I left school I was a complete atheist. Then I began to study the other main religions in the world. I began with Buddhism. I studied with interest the eightfold path, and felt that it contained good aims but was lacking in direction and details.

"In Hinduism I was faced not with three, but with hundreds of Gods, the stories of which were too fantastic and revolting to me to accept.

"I read a little of Judaism, but I had already seen enough of the Old Testament to realize that it did not stand my tests of what

a religion must be. A friend of mine persuaded me to study spiritualism and to sit for the purpose of being controlled by the discarnate spirits. I did not continue this practice very long as I was quite convinced that, in my case anyway, it was purely a matter of self-hypnosis, and would be dangerous to experiment further.

"The war ended. I took work in a London office, but my mind never strayed far from the religious quest. A letter appeared in the local paper, to which I wrote a reply contradicting the divinity of Christ from the Biblical point of view. This brought me in contact with a number of people, one of whom was a Muslim. I started discussing Islam with this new acquaintance. On every point my desire to resist Islam fell down. Though I had thought it impossible, I had to acknowledge that perfect revelation had come through an ordinary human being, since the best of twentieth century governments could not improve upon that revelation, and were themselves continually borrowing from the Islamic system.

"At this time I met a number of other Muslims, and some of the English girl converts endeavoured to help me, with no little success, since, coming from the same background, they understood better some of my difficulties. I read a number of books, including *The Religion of Islam* and *Muhammad and Christ,* by Muhammad 'Ali, and several by Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, whose *The Sources of Christianity,* showing the amazing similarities between Christianity and the old pagan myths, impressed me greatly. Above all I read the Holy Qur'án. At first it seemed mainly repetition. I was never quite sure if I was taking it in or not, but the Qur'án, I found, works silently on the spirit. Night after night I could not put it down. Yet I often wondered how perfect guidance for man could come through imperfect human channels at all. Muslims made no claim for Muhammad that he was superhuman. I learned that in Islam prophets are men who have remained sinless, and that 'revelation' was no new thing. The Jewish prophets of old received it. Jesus, too, was a prophet. Still it puzzled me why it did not happen any more in the twentieth century. I was asked to look at what the Qur'án said. 'Muhammad . . . is the Messenger of God and the last of the Prophets'. And of course it was perfectly reasonable, too. How could there be other prophets to come if the Holy Qur'án was 'the Book . . . explaining all things' and 'verifying that which is with you' and if it was to remain uncorrupted in the world as guaranteed in the Qur'án, and perfectly kept so far? 'Surely We have revealed the Reminder and surely We are its Guardian.' In that case there *could* be no need of further prophets or books. Still I pondered. I read that the Qur'án is a guide to those who ponder (16 : 65) and that doubters

were asked to try and produce a chapter like it (2 : 23). Surely, I thought, it must be possible to produce a better living plan in 1954, than this which dates back to a man born in the year 570 C.E. ? I set to work, but everywhere I failed.

"No doubt influenced by the usual condemnation of Islam from Christian pulpits on the subject, I picked on polygamy. At last I thought I had something ! Obviously Western monogamy was an improvement on this old system. I talked of it to my Muslim friend. He illustrated with the aid of newspaper articles how much *true* monogamy there was in England, and convinced me that a limited polygamy was the answer to the secret unions that are becoming so distressingly common in the West. My own common sense could see that, particularly after a war, when women of a certain age group far outnumber men, a percentage of them are destined to remain spinsters. Did God give them life for that? I recollect that on the radio programme known as 'Dear Sir' an unmarried English girl had called for lawful polygamy, saying she would prefer a shared married life rather than the loneliness to which she seemed to be destined. I heard that lonely spinsters are rarely met with in Muslim countries. In Islam, no one is forced into a polygamous marriage, but in a perfect religion, the opportunity must be there to meet those cases where it is necessary.

"Then about ritual prayers I thought I had a point. Surely prayers repeated five times a day must become just a meaningless habit? My friend had a quick and illuminating answer. 'What about your music practice,' he asked, 'where you do scales for half an hour every day whether you feel like it or not? Of course, it is not good if it becomes a dead habit — to be thinking of what is being done will give greater benefit — but even scales done without thinking will be better than not doing them at all, and so it is with prayers.' Any music student will see the point of this, particularly if he bears in mind that in Islam prayers are not said for the benefit of God, Who is above needing them, but for our own benefit, as a spiritual exercise, besides other uses.

"Thus gradually I became convinced of the truth in the teachings of Islam, and formally accepted the faith. I did this with great satisfaction, as I could fully realize that it was no emotional craze of a moment, but a long process of reasoning, lasting nearly two years, through which I went despite my emotions that pulled me so strongly the other way."

MAVIS B. JOLLY (England).

Husein Rofé (England).

" When people decide to embrace a religion other than that in which the circumstances of their birth had placed them, their motives usually have an emotional, philosophical or social foundation. My temperament demanded a creed which could meet the demands of the last two of these categories, and I did nothing less than decide to examine minutely the claims, scriptures and results produced by all the world's chief religions.

" Born of parents representing the Jewish and Catholic faiths, and brought up in the Church of England traditions, of which I obtained a thorough experience through years of attending its services in the daily routine of the English public school, I commenced early to contrast the dogmas and rituals of Judaism and Christianity. Intuition led me to reject the doctrines of Divine incarnation, and vicarious atonement, and the intellect could neither find satisfaction in manifold Biblical propositions nor in the absence of a living faith based on reason which I noted in the conventional approach to God of the average Church of England Christian.

" In Judaism, I found a much more dignified conception of God, though even this varied with the books of the Bible. Here was a faith which had retained much of its former purity. I learnt much from it, but rejected much. Following all the rules and prescriptions would have left little time for attending to any secular affairs.

The mind would have had to be concentrated on endless forms and rituals. Worst of all, it was for a minority and led implicitly to the creation of a gulf between different social groups.

"While I witnessed Church of England services, and those of the Jewish synagogues, and took part in them both, I never embraced either religion. In Roman Catholicism, I found too much mystification and subjection to human authority, often manifestly displaying frailty inconsistent with the semi-divine claims advanced for the Pope and his henchmen. I turned to Hindu philosophy, especially to the later teachings of the Upanishads, and Vedanta. Again I learnt much, respected much, and rejected much. Social evils were not solved, and the priestly caste was again favoured with innumerable privileges, while none stretched a helping hand to the poor outcast. His fate was his own fault, and if he bore it patiently, a future life might bring him something better. A convenient way of keeping the populace in subjection. Religion seemed to mean the creation of an omnipotent hierarchy, with God called in to testify that it was His Will that things should so remain.

"Buddhism taught me much about the human mind and its laws. It showed me a method for obtaining cosmic understanding as simple as a chemical experiment, provided I made the necessary sacrifices. Here was reaction against the caste system.

"But in Buddhism, like Hinduism, I found no moral teaching. I learnt how to obtain superhuman powers, or what the mass considers such, but soon I learnt that these were no evidence of spirituality. Rather they showed the ability to master a science, a pastime at a much higher level than sport ethically, a means of controlling emotions, of disciplining and subjecting all desires, as sought also by the Stoics. But the question of God did not arise at all. There was hardly any reference to the Creator of all this universe. Only a way to be followed for one's own salvation, though the Bodhisattva ideal did preach sacrificing one's own salvation to assist that of others. In this case, there was spirituality, and not only the control of animal, natural forces. Buddhism could theoretically save the world, as could that basic Christianity of Tolstoy, reduced to the words of the Prophet Jesus, shorn of later accretions and misunderstandings.

"Yet if such beliefs could save the world in theory, why did they fail to do so in practice? The answer was that they were not for the mass but for the few. Both Christianity and Buddhism, if understood as the teaching of their founders, evaded social problems, for they had no interest in them. Both Jesus and Buddha taught the ideal of abandoning all possessions, total annihilation of the lower self in search of God. 'Resist not evil' or 'Vairagyam'; 'Take no thought for the morrow' or the

begging-bowl. I have the greatest admiration for the men who can follow this path. I am sure that it can lead them to God. But I am equally sure that it cannot be practised by the masses, that it cannot better the lot of the ignorant peasant, and that for that reason it has little social value. A glorious teaching for a spiritual giant; a total failure for the mass of humanity. An intellectual satisfaction, yet useless as a means of revolutionizing the mass and bettering their conditions spiritually, mentally and materially within a short space of time.

"It was perhaps strange that, having lived in Arab countries, I had never devoted more than a superficial attention to Islam, and had not given it the minute examination I had accorded all the world's other faiths. Yet when I reflect that my former introduction to this faith had been confined to reading Rodwell's translation of the Qur'án, it is not so surprising that I was none too enthusiastic. Only later did I come in touch with a well-known Islamic missionary in London. Subsequently I have noticed that little is done in most Arab lands to interest the non-Muslim in Islam, and to spread its teachings where they could bear good fruit. Only too often is there such a mistrust of the foreigner that one sees the characteristic Eastern policy of concealment rather than diffusion.

"Under intelligent guidance, provided with a Qur'án commented on and translated by a Muslim, and with much other informative literature to give me a true picture of Islam, it was not long before I discovered here what I had been searching for during many years.

"An invitation to watch the prayers and participate in the lunch after the 'Id prayers one day in 1945 gave me the opportunity to study an international group of Muslims at close quarters at the Woking mosque. Here was no group of Arabs, no nationalism, but a representative assortment of the world's races, social classes, hues of skins. Here I met a Turkish prince and also people who might practically have been termed beggars. These people all sat down to lunch together. No ill-concealed condescension was apparent in the attitude of the rich; no smug hypocrisy in the feeling of equality which animated the white men talking to their Negro neighbours; no attempt to draw away, to isolate oneself from other human beings; no ridiculous snobbery with primitive egotism masquerading as virtue. . . .

"There is not space here to describe all of the facets of life for which I found in Islamic teaching an answer which had been lacking elsewhere. Suffice it to say that after due reflection, I was led to enter this faith, after having studied every other important religion in the world without having decided to embrace it.

"The above explains why I *am* a Muslim. It does not altogether explain why I am *proud to be one*. This feeling was

only to come through time and experience. I studied Islamic culture at an English university, and learnt for the first time that it was precisely this culture which had brought Europe out of the Dark Ages. I learnt from history how many of the world's greatest empires had been Islamic, how much modern science has to acknowledge as a legacy of Islam. And when people came to me to explain that I had taken a step backwards, I smiled at their ignorance. mingling cause and effect. Is the world only to judge Islam by the fact that quite external factors produced subsequent degeneracy? Is Renaissance art less valid because abortions are being painted universally today? Is Christianity to be labelled bloodthirsty barbarism because of the medieval inquisitors and Spanish conquistadores? It is only necessary to remark that the greatest and most advanced minds of all ages have been able to feel respect for Islamic culture, most of the pearls of which are yet hidden from the West.

" Having travelled in many countries all over the world, I have had good opportunity to notice how strangers are everywhere received ; where the first reaction is to help them, and where it is to consider first who they are, and what advantages may be reaped from such assistance. The followers of no other religion can equal Muslims for hospitality and disinterested kindness to strangers. Economically it is only in Islamic communities that the gulf between rich and poor is bridged in such a way that the poor will not endeavour to upset the entire structure to produce chaos. Modern Soviet Communism could never have come to birth in a Muslim State. . . "

HUSEIN ROFE.

" After passing through the stages of childish atheism, agnosticism, half-hearted Christianity, and after having been tempted by and bitterly disillusioned by Roman Catholicism, I discovered Islam. The day I began to study Islam was the end of the beginning. I found in Islam a religion of simplicity and great beauty, a religion at once different from the so-called Christianity and its pessimistic outlook on man by its burning optimism, a religion that appeals, as does no other, to man's reason. After studying Islam, with the kind

Lewis Orvis Hassan Evans (U.S.A.).

help of the Woking Muslim Mission, I came to the conclusion that I had always been a Muslim. I felt that by joining the Islamic Brotherhood I was not so much becoming converted as realizing to the fullest what I had always believed in."

LEWIS ORVIS HASSAN EVANS.

Mr. Said F. Valyi, the Hungarian publicist and statesman, was born in 1885. He won distinction at an early age, and was "crowned" by the University of Paris for an essay he had written when he was seventeen. The University of Vienna conferred upon him the degree of Ph.D. He embraced Islam at the London Muslim Prayer House of the Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust in 1918.

Mr. Valyi devoted his life to the study of Muslim history, and was well known both as an historian and philosopher. His studies in Vienna, Budapest, Berlin, Paris, London, Constantinople and Cairo enabled him to foresee the causes of the downfall of Christianity and to elaborate a programme for the revival of Islam.

Mr. Valyi was the editor of that remarkable symposium of divergent opinions, *La Revue Politique Internationale,* which constituted one of the most important historical documents of the 'twenties of world-politics. His book, *Europe in Asia Minor,* which

Said F. Valyi (Hungary).

created a sensation throughout Europe and was translated into more than one language, contributed not a little to the change in the Western attitude towards Turkey, and was one of the first impartial attempts to render justice to Turkey. SAID F. VALYI.
(*The Islamic Review*, April 1926.)

" The badges of Western civilization are imperialism, materialism, technical efficiency, engineering, banking, etc., but, if the West did not learn the first principles of these things from the Muslims, how is it that such names as Bokhara, Samarkand, Delhi, Baghdad, Damascus, Cairo, Tunis, Granada, just to mention a few, conjure up memories of unsurpassed skill and teaching in military and civil arts, architecture, engineering, to say nothing of mathematics, astronomy, poetry, painting and music.

" The key to the truth was revealed to me by an old man who sold me a melon in Tunisia during the war. Through him I discovered that Muslims did in fact accept Jesus as a prophet of their own. I fell into conversation with this man and he invited me to have coffee with himself and some passers-by who were his neighbours. Discussion ranged over crops, politics, the war and finally religion. I have not heard from the most devout Christian a more

Harold A. Sims (England).

human description of the life of Jesus and Mary than that given by my host, who was speaking his own mind in French.

"When I left them, they had no idea that their courtesy and simple religious insight had disposed of what had been for me an insuperable obstacle. The wise tolerance of these men was the answer to the image in my mind of a religious fanatic. This led to my acceptance of Islam.

"I found that I had been shown the last link in the Divine revelation of man's purpose here on earth. I found, too, that Islam spells freedom. There is nothing between man and his God. . . .

"Islam, to my relief, is not pacifist. The law in regard to fighting, however, is strict. In defence of the faith or the faithful in trouble, it becomes the duty of all Muslims to exert every fibre of their being in pressing war upon the enemy until that enemy sues for peace, at which moment the war must stop. Such practices as the holding of a post-war witch-hunt for the slaying of war-time enemies — sometimes years later — is abhorrent to Islam.

"Greatest of all, I found that the Prophet Muhammad's mission was to complete, not destroy, the work of Jesus. The Holy Qur'án contains the pattern which shows that indeed mankind was meant to conform to the laws of the universe, and like the universe, the range of man becomes vast and awe-inspiring in such a concept."

(*The Islamic Review*, April 1949. HAROLD A. SIMS.

Muhammad Tewfiq Killinger (Czechoslovakia).

Mr. Muhammad Tewfiq Killinger was born in Hodony, Rumania, on 14th November 1875. He is a descendant of a noble and illustrious family renowned for its valour in the field for a period extending over four centuries. He was educated at the Gymnasium at Taus, and later at the Military College in Mahrisch-Weisskirchen. In 1898 he joined the Dutch Colonial Army. In 1907 he returned to Europe to prosecute his studies further, and had the good fortune of being trained under the supervision of General Wille at Zurich. He then studied criminology at the respective police headquarters of Vienna, Berlin, Basel, Brussels, Paris and London. In 1909 he was appointed a General by President Castro and organized the entire Venezuelan Army. He returned to the Dutch East Indies and was head of the Dutch Military Police for some years. It was during this, his second stay among the Muslims of that land, that he was strongly impressed with the beauties and simplicity of the Faith of Islam. He embraced Islam publicly, and thus for some time became the victim of Christian intolerance. During the Great War (1914-18) he fought for the Turks in Dardanelles, Syria, Mesopotamia and the Caucasus.

MUHAMMAD TEWFIQ KILLINGER.

(*The Islamic Review*, July 1924.)

"I COULD NOT BELIEVE IN THE TRINITY"

"I was born of Christian parents and, as is the custom, was baptized into the Christian Church when only a few months old. Throughout my schooldays I received regular religious instruction, being taught that God begat a son of a virgin named Mary. The son was called Jesus Christ and he was sent to this earth to save mankind. He preached of God's forgiveness and love and of the Kingdom of Heaven, which was waiting for us after death. He performed many miracles, healed the sick, and brought back to life a man supposed to be dead. His enemies continually persecuted him and eventually, after much suffering, he was put on the Cross, where he gave up his ghost. Friends took away his body and hid it in a sepulchre. After three days he was resurrected and appeared to a few of his disciples before ascending to Heaven, where he now sits on the right hand of God, awaiting his return to the earth in later ages.

"As is the case with most children, I suppose, I accepted all this without question, and regarded it as a wonderful fairy tale but attached no spiritual meaning to it.

"At the age of fourteen or fifteen years it is customary for a child to renew his vows which were originally made for him at the time of Baptism, and this ceremony is known as Confirmation. Thus, on reaching this age, the question of my Confirmation arose. However, by this time I had been attempting to reason out the lessons I had been taught on Christianity, and could not help questioning the things I had been asked to believe. I was very fond of reading and managed to obtain books on a variety of subjects. Besides discovering more of the world in general, I started looking at my religious views from a different aspect. I was not able to appreciate the seriousness of the situation, but, as I was not being pressed to become Confirmed, I decided to postpone the matter until I could genuinely believe in the vows I should have to take.

"During the course of my studies I obtained a book dealing with the Arabs, their ways of life and their customs. I learnt that they were mostly of the Muslim religion, and this religion seemed to be a predominating factor in their life. There were many stories circulating about Islam, some false and some twisted versions of

the truth. I heard that Muslims were allowed to marry four wives, that they worshipped Muhammad, and, on hearing that a Muslim was not permitted to dance, I became more curious about the teachings of Islam.

"I was advised by a friend to read *The Sayings of Muhammad.* It told me nothing of the life of the Prophet, but I came to know his views on many subjects. They were simple and instructive. They, of course, did not teach me all there is to know about Islam, but they did show me that there was nothing unusual about this religion and that it could contain some spiritual meaning for me. Thus the first spark of interest was kindled.

"A year of two later I left my home to come to work in London, and then came to hear about the Mosque at Woking. I decided to visit it, primarily to see the building itself, as I had never seen Eastern architecture before, and then to enquire about Islam. The Mosque greatly impressed me, but the most impressive thing was the friendly reception accorded to me by the people there. There was little I could say as I hardly knew what I wanted to know. However, I was given several pamphlets and a copy of the English translation of the Qur'án by Maulana Muhammad 'Ali. After a very enjoyable day I returned to the hospital where I was getting my training.

"On glancing through the pamphlets I was able to gather some of the information for which I had been searching, and then, without being really aware of it, I felt myself becoming interested, not from the desire to read of something strange and unusual, but from a desire to discover the answer to the question I had been asking myself for so long about the existence of God. I could understand these words without any difficulty, and they were offering me a way of life which was simple to follow, but which in its very simplicity held the essential qualities. Could this be the truth for which I had been searching?

"At this moment the seriousness of the situation occurred to me. Here I was contemplating changing my religion, and it seemed that I was denying the faith into which I had been born. It was then that I decided to give the problem a real study, and hoped that in doing so I should be able to sort out my tangled thoughts. Up to then Christianity to me had been just another part of the life around me; in fact, it seemed to be more a social system than a religion. However, I decided to study it with an abstract mind, without prejudice for or against.

"To begin with, it appeared that I should have to believe in the Holy Trinity, this being a belief that there are three persons in the Godhead — God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

This alone set me doubting, for I could not believe Jesus to be the Son of God in that sense. I regarded him as a son only in the same way that we are all called the sons and daughters of God. I then read parts of the New Testament in order to find the message that Jesus had brought to the world, but could not find it as it was so intermingled with stories and tales of miracles. In fact, it seemed to me just what it was, a collection of tales and happenings written by several men. No direct message of God was written there except a few maxims for good behaviour, but life as a whole was not the theme of the New Testament. Teachings of extreme mercy and forgiveness, if applied to daily life, would not work, and these could not form the basis of any human society.

"I then took the Qur'án and read it, finding that it considered every aspect of life, thus guiding one during every day in everything one did. It did, in fact, contain the direct message of God — as it had been received by the Prophet Muhammad and, unlike other sacred scriptures of the world, had been preserved in its entirety. Thus I made my choice, picking the Qur'án as the True Word of God.

> 'O followers of the Book! Do not exceed the limits in your religion, and do not speak (lies) against God, but (speak) the truth; the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, is only an apostle of God and His word, which He communicated to Mary and a spirit from Him; believe therefore in God and His apostles, and say not, Three. Desist, it is better for you; God is only one God; far be it from His glory that He should have a son! whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His; and God is sufficient as a Protector. The Messiah does by no means disdain that he should be a servant of God, nor do the angels who are near to him' (4 : 171-172).

"Of God's mercy and forgiving nature I read:

> 'O my servants, who have acted extravagantly against their own souls, do not despair of the Mercy of God; for God forgives sins altogether; for He is the Forgiving, the Merciful' (39 : 53).
>
> 'And He is the Forgiving, the Loving' (85 : 14).
>
> 'And ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn to Him. Surely my Lord is Merciful, Loving-kind' (11 : 90).

("Those people who think that in Islam God is not a loving God should ponder over these verses.")

> 'Our Lord, Thou embracest all things in mercy and knowledge' (40 : 7).
>
> 'Say: In the grace of God and in His mercy, in that they should rejoice. It is better than that which they hoard' (10 : 58).

'Despair not of God's mercy. Surely none despairs of God's mercy except the disbelieving people' (12 : 87).

'He has ordained mercy on Himself' (6 : 12).

("If God is Forgiving and Merciful and has ordained mercy on Himself, the question of Redemption does not arise.")

'Your Lord is the Lord of all encompassing mercy' (6 : 148).

'And My mercy encompasses all things' (7 : 156).

"Who is God?

'God is He besides whom there is no god, the Ever-living, the Self-subsisting by Whom all subsist; slumber does not overtake Him nor sleep; whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His; who is he that can intercede with Him but by his permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot comprehend anything out of His knowledge except what He pleases; His knowledge extends over the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of them both tires Him not; and He is the Most High, the Great' (2 : 255).

'And your God is one God; there is no god but He' (2 : 163).

'Say: I am forbidden to serve those whom you call upon besides God' (6 : 56).

'Call not upon anyone with God. . . . Say, I call upon God only and I do not associate anyone with Him' (72 : 18-20).

"God was thus presented to me as a Being whom it was easy to love and respect, easy to love for Himself and not from fear of Hell or hope of Paradise. There once lived a saintly lady of Islam named Rabia, and she was once heard to declare:

'O my Lord, if I worship Thee from fear of Hell, burn me in Hell, and if I worship Thee from hope of Paradise, exclude me thence. But if I worship Thee for thine own sake, then withhold not from me thine Eternal Beauty.'

It is a prayer worth remembering.

"I have been asked by several non-Muslims why, if I believe in the existence of Jesus Christ, and that he also preached God's message, why then did I turn from Christianity to Islam? One answer is, as I have already explained, that I could not believe in the Trinity. I could not believe in the Resurrection. I could not even feel sure that Christ died on the Cross for the sins of humanity. However, it seems that one has to believe these things if one is a Christian. Again, on reading the Bible, I could not discover the original message sent by God through Jesus. So many stories and legends have been wound around his life in an attempt to prove his relationship to God that the only success achieved has been the almost complete loss of his original teachings. . . ."

J. D. H. (England).

Ameena Agnes Deeves (England)

" Islam is a beautiful religion, and those who keep the precepts must be living as near to God as it is possible for mankind to do, and thereby find peace."

AMEENA AGNES DEEVES.

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ ۭ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا
لِأَنفُسِكُم مِّن خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِندَ اللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ○

" And be steadfast in worship and pay the poor rate. And whatever good you send before for yourselves, you will find it with God. Surely God is seer of what you do " (The Qur'án, 2 : 110).

J. W. B. Farmer (England).

" A friend of mine recently asked me why I had turned to Islam. In reply to this question I gave three reasons. First, Islam is a practical religion, a religion free from mystery and superstition, a religion that can be easily understood ; it is a religion that contains nothing irrational and is unencumbered by theological subtleties.

" Secondly, it is a religion that deals with the fundamentals. It gets right down to the basic laws of nature. It knows of no split between science and religion but recognizes that religion is the greatest of all sciences, the science of good and successful living.

" Thirdly, it offers a complete code of living for all spheres of man's activity on this earth. No matter if it is a social, civic, military or commercial matter, Islam gives its guidance. Islam regulates all that a human being has to do ; it deals with worldly conditions, it is for the people of the world."

J. W. B. FARMER.

L. R. Priestley (Australia).

" It is ten years since I embraced Islam, and the decision taken is one I have never regretted. With it was lifted the weight of doubt and frustration which had been my constant companion over many years. It is a burden which one cannot share. Looking back over those years in retrospect, they fall into four clear stages. I would like to tell, briefly, the story of this evolution.

" The first stage commenced when, as a small boy, my parents sent me to Sunday School. It was a Baptist School, chosen for no better reason than the fact that it was quite near to my home. Here, the simple story of Jesus Christ (May peace be on him !) ; the name became associated with little children, the inn, shepherds and parables. It was accompanied by simple but rather nice hymns, and attendance was encouraged through the medium of an annual outing, and a presentation for regular attendance. This stage lasted several years, until I became of age to join the Scout Movement.

" The troop I joined had, in its leaders and ranks, young men who were members of the Church whose hall was used for our weekly meetings. Once a month we had to attend a Church Parade, and thus the stage was set to drift into stage two. From a child's Sunday School to the adult Church is a big step. No longer was it a question of teaching a simple story ; it now involved Latin phrases, the presence of a priest, and the performing of, or suggesting of, mysterious things was deemed to be essential.

" I questioned the differences in the form and matter of the teaching but my elders frowned, telling me that it was my " duty "

to believe without question, and told me, furthermore, that I must not blaspheme. Thus were sown the seeds of doubt, and this stage continued until frustration gained the upper hand, and, finally, I ceased to attend the Church or the Scout Movement.

" So I drifted for a number of years until, eventually, in the early days of the war, I enlisted in the Army. Here I found yet another change. The Army brand of faith is not concerned with the spiritual welfare of the inner man so much as with the parade-ground smartness of the outer man. The service of any denomination was prefaced by cleaning and polishing, parading and inspecting, and if the individual was below standard, one awaited the officer's pleasure ; and so Church Parade and the act of attending service became not a pleasure but something one avoided, as a point of honour. Even these standards and methods varied from unit to unit ; no one, it seems, ever suggested that the state of a man's soul should be the criterion for parading, rather than the parading being justification for going to worship. Later the opportunity arose to change my regiment, and at the new induction I became one of the vast number with " Nil " against my religion, and continued to follow this path until I entered the Palestine Police Force, and the final stage.

" With my interest aroused at the thought of going to the Holy Land, I made an effort to sweep away the mental cobwebs of the years, for there, I imagined, I should find some of the answers to my queries. Far from finding answers, I was faced with even more differences in form and teaching, and worse, an undercurrent of hate and distrust between the various sects, with a liberal dash of politics thrown in for good measure. Then, by accident, a new-comer to Jerusalem, I wandered into the sacred grounds of the Harem-esh-Sherif. From this chance encounter I made new friends and gathered information on their particular beliefs. My questions I found could be answered, logically and in full. Whereas the Church had never mentioned the Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace !), I found that the names of Jesus, Moses, Abraham and many others were well known to, and venerated by, Muslims.

" Gradually Islam claimed me ; slowly I learned. Conviction, supported by logical argument and reasoned explanation, is a very powerful force, and here, I feel, is the basis of one of the major failings of the Christian Church. Conviction it may well have, but not logical argument or reasoned explanation. Thus, after many years of doubting and avoiding, I have found my answers, and my faith.

Alhamdillah !

"Here in Australia Muslims are permitted to worship and to practise their faith without fear or interference. An incorporated society is in existence in Adelaide, of which I am proud to have been the first President. Similar societies are, at this very moment, being established in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, and a close and active liaison is kept with our Muslim neighbours like Indonesia, Malaya, Fiji, the Philippines and Pakistan. If it is the will of God, I shall be given some opportunity to play a part in the field of Islam in this quarter of the globe in the years ahead.

Inshallah!"

R. L. PRIESTLEY.

(*The Islamic Review*, September 1957.)

Lt.-Col. 'Abdullah F. B. Baines-Hewitt (England)

"The avoidance of evil and the cultivation of what is fine and good is what Islam is about, and we all bear witness to this."

'ABDULLAH F. B. BAINES-HEWITT.

Abd al-Rashid Derek Howard-Smith with his wife (England).

"The idea of One God, the Creator, appealed to me, but in my ignorance I thought of the Arabs as barbaric. I expect the type of Foreign Legion tale is the cause of this in the West. An incident occurred, however, to make me change my views. During my holidays last year I spotted a copy of Muhammad 'Ali's *The Prophet Muhammad,* in the 'Living Thoughts' series (London, 1947).

"This excellent book threw a great deal of light on Islam in general, the author having certainly anticipated the kind of criticism to be expected from the West. . . . After that I was filled with the desire to examine the contents of the Qur'án. . . . A lot of my interest was only curiosity; it was not until I really 'got my teeth into it' that I noticed how well the Holy Qur'án summed up mankind in general. . . . The thing that finally decided me in favour of Islam was, I think, a certain invocation to prayer which I copied from a book on Middle East travel. The following is the English translation of the invocation. The *Fajr* (morning):

"'O ye faithful, scatter the darkness of your hearts; free yourselves from gloom; re-enter into yourselves before you enter the new day. Open your souls to the brightness of your Faith, as you open your eyelids to the dawn. O Believers, let him who has transgressed the law go and repent himself; let him who has committed an injustice hasten to repair it; let him who has done some violence accuse himself before God. Exalt your spirit; for dawn is breaking, for the glory of The Creator shines forth.'

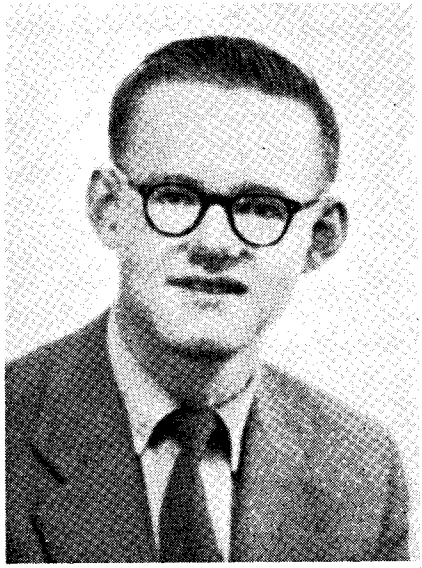
"This was absolutely wonderful; this was the very spirit that was needed in the world. What a truly magnificent way to start a new day, what a splendid example this was; this was the fervour that the West needed. In spite of its superiority complex and so-called civilization, it possessed nothing as beautiful as this and persisted in labelling the East as barbaric. . . . This then is my account of how I have come to embrace Islam. . . . I thank God for His guidance. 'Verily God sendeth astray whom He willeth, and guideth to Himself whosoever turns devoutly to Him'."

ABD AL-RASHID DEREK HOWARD-SMITH.

(*The Islamic Review*, January 1952.)

اُتْلُ مَآ اُوْحِيَ اِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتٰبِ وَاَقِمِ الصَّلٰوةَ ۭ اِنَّ الصَّلٰوةَ تَنْهٰى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاۗءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ ۭ وَلَذِكْرُ اللّٰهِ اَكْبَرُ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُوْنَ

"Recite that which has been revealed to thee of the Book and keep up prayer. Surely prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil; and certainly the remembrance of God *(dhikr Allah)* is the greatest (force). And God knows what you do" (The Qur'án, 29 : 45).



Mahmud Gunnar Erikson (Sweden).

" I praise God and pray for His noble Prophet. I bear witness that there is no god but God alone. He has no partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

" It was about five years ago when I first came in contact with Islam. A very good friend of mine wanted to read the Holy Qur'án for some reason. I did not want to be ignorant of that book if he knew something about it, and so I also tried to get hold of a Swedish translation. I managed to find one before he did, and started to read it. As I had borrowed it from a library, I could not have it for more than a fortnight, but I borrowed it again and again. The more I read of it the more I became convinced that this was the Truth. So one day in November 1950 I made up my mind to become a ' Mohammedan '.

" One or two years passed by. I maintained that I was a ' Mohammedan ', but it was nothing more. I did not enquire further into Islam till one day I visited the main library in Stockholm. Remembering that I was a ' Mohammedan ', I made up my mind to see if the library had got some literature on the ' Mohammedan ' religion, and to my astonishment, found some books by Muhammad 'Ali, Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, Lord Headley and others. I borrowed a few of them and read them carefully, together with Muhammad

'Ali's *Translation of the Holy Qur'án*. Now I became more convinced than ever of the truth of Islam, and I also began to practise it.

"Just by chance, I happened to come in touch with a Muslim association in Sweden, and I attended 'Id prayer in Stockholm for the first time in 1952.

"This was my position when I went to England just a few weeks before 'Id al-Fitr 1372 A.H. The first day I was in England I went to Woking, where it was suggested that I should publicly declare my faith in Islam on 'Id day, which I consequently did.

"What especially appealed to me in Islam was and is its rationalism. You are not asked to believe anything without reason. The Holy Qur'án gives us proofs of the existence of God that leave nothing further to be wished for. Another appeal of Islam is its universality. The Qur'án does not talk about God as the Lord of the Arabs or of any special people, nay, not even as the Lord of the World, but as the Lord of the worlds, while earlier revealed books talk about 'the Lord God of Israel', etc. Furthermore, we are asked to believe in all the prophets, whether mentioned in the Holy Qur'án or not. Finally, in previous revelations we find several prophecies which without the shadow of a doubt prophesy about the Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace and the blessings of God!), and in the Qur'án God says: 'Surely, this day We have completed Our favour on you, and chosen for you Islam as a religion,' and 'Surely, the religion with God is Islam'.

MAHMUD GUNNAR ERIKSON.

لَآ إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ ۖ قَد تَّبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ

"There is no compulsion in religion — the right way is indeed clearly distinct from error." (The Qur'án, 2 : 256).

S. A. Board (U.S.A.).

" It was some time during 1920, while in a doctor's office, I saw an issue of the *African Times and Orient Review,* London, edited by Duse Muhammad 'Ali, of 158, Fleet Street, London. It was an article on Islam by, I think, Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din. In this article there was an expression which caught my eye, and I shall never forget it as it has become a part of me. The expression read, *La ilaha illa Allah !* — There is but one God. This was a priceless possession which Muslims carry in their breasts.

" Soon after I became a Muslim and received the name of Salah-ud-Din. I believe Islam is the right faith, for it joins no partners with God and teaches us that no one can answer for our sins. Also, it harmonizes with nature, which shows us there can't be two bosses on a job, whether in the barnyard, pasture, city, state, nation or the universe. Another fact that convinced me of the truth of the message of Islam was that it aroused the Arabs, and out of the mystic deserts surged the sturdy followers of Islam, who welded the world into a new empire and sang songs of love and victory in the vales of Andalusia.

" The Muslim Moors found Spain a jungle, and turned it into a ' Garden of Roses '. I thank God for a man like John W. Draper, who, in his *The Intellectual Development of Europe,* gives the world

the truth about the great part Islam played in originating modern civilization. He, as a matter of fact, deplores the way Christian historians try to put out of sight Europe's debt to Islam.

"Here is his description of the natives of Europe as the Moors found them :

> "'From the barbarism of the native people of Europe, who could scarcely be said to have emerged from the savage state, unclean in person, benighted in mind, inhabiting huts in which it was a mark of wealth if there were bulrushes on the floor and straw mats against the wall; miserably fed on beans, vetches, roots and even the bark of trees; clad in garments of untanned skin, or at the best of leather, perennial in durability but not conducive to personal purity.
>
> "'To the Saracen, Europe is indebted for many of its personal comforts. Religiously clean, it was not possible for them to clothe themselves according to the fashion of the natives of Europe, in a garment unchanged till it dropped to pieces, a loathsome mass of vermin, stench and rags."

"The Arabs, being able to inspire a people to emerge from the 'slough of despondency', of darkness, ignorance and superstition, and cause their descendants to 'sit on top of the world', must have had God with them. God, Muhammad and the Qur'án changed the history of the world, and without them the great wonders of present-day science would not exist.

"'Seek knowledge even if you have to go to China," said Muhammad.

"Ashhadu an la ilaha illa Allah :
"Ashhadu anna Muhammad-an
"Rasul Allah!"

S. A. BOARD.

(*The Islamic Review*, August-September, 1922.)

"No other religion professed by a large community have I found so comprehensible and encouraging. There seems no better way towards tranquillity of mind and contentment in life, no greater promise for the future after death."

MISS MAS'UDAH STEINMANN (Germany).

(*The Islamic Review*, September-October 1959.)

Thomas Muhammad Clayton (U.S.A.).

" The sun had just passed the meridian. As we walked along the hot, dusty road, we heard or rather felt a monotonous but strangely beautiful chant fill the air about us. Passing through a group of trees, a strange and wondrous sight befell our unbelieving eyes. There, on a recently improvised high wooden tower, a blind Arab, clad in spotless raimant and white turban, seemed to harangue the very heavens with his fascinating intonation. We sat down with no conscious effort, hypnotized by his weird, spirit-like refrain. The words we did not understand fell fascinatingly upon our ears, *Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar; La Ilaha illa 'l-Lah; La Ilaha illa 'l-Lah* — God is the Greatest; God is the Greatest; there is no god but God.

" Before, we had been aware of nothing going on about us, but now we noticed that a great number of people were beginning to assemble. People of all ages, of all manners of dress, of all walks of life, were approaching with a taciturnity which betokened reverence. They spread long mats upon the ground which produced an interesting colour contrast between the green of the grass and the tan of the mats. More and more people came, and indeed, we had begun to wonder whether the assembly would ever be complete. The people took off their shoes and sandals and formed long lines,

one line falling in behind the other. We were amazed, even in our silent passive observation, that no distinctions of any kind were to be found in this congregation. Here were white men, yellow men, black men, poor men, wealthy men, beggars, and merchants, all standing side by side with no thought of race or social station in life. Not one single person in that whole gathering looked away from the mat immediately in front of him.

"The fraternal spirit displayed by that heterogeneous group is an impression which is not easily nor soon lost. Almost three years have now passed since that event, two of which I have been a Muslim, and I find myself even now awakening in the middle of the night to hear once more that beautiful and plaintive chant, and to see again those men who displayed the true attributes of men who sincerely seek their God."

THOMAS MUHAMMAD CLAYTON.

(*The Islamic Review*, November 1950.)

أَرَءَيْتَ ٱلَّذِى يُكَذِّبُ بِٱلدِّينِ ۝ فَذَٰلِكَ ٱلَّذِى يَدُعُّ ٱلْيَتِيمَ ۝
وَلَا يَحُضُّ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ ٱلْمِسْكِينِ ۝ فَوَيْلٌ لِّلْمُصَلِّينَ ۝ ٱلَّذِينَ
هُمْ عَن صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ ۝ ٱلَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَآءُونَ ۝ وَ
يَمْنَعُونَ ٱلْمَاعُونَ ۝

"Hast thou seen him who belies religion? That is the one who is rough to the orphan, and urges not the feeding of the poor. So woe to the worshipping ones who are unmindful of their prayers! Who do (good) to be seen and refrain from acts of kindness" (The Qur'án, 107 : 1-7).

Olive Toto (England).

"Many people used to say to me, 'How did you become a Muslim?' My reply was, 'Well, as a child I went to the Mosque and grew up with Islam.' 'Oh! sort of drifted into Islam?' 'Now that is where you are wrong,' I would reply. 'As a child, I went to Sunday School, learnt Christianity for some hours every Sunday, and afterwards I would go to the Mosque. I did not drift into Islam. I studied it, and liked it, knowing it respected all religions.' 'Then how did your father become a Muslim?' they would ask, and this would be my reply.

"About sixty years ago, or maybe more, a boy stood listening to a lecture by a speaker who spoke of a religion, Islam by name, which taught One God, not three in one. The town was Plymouth, in Devonshire. The boy, 16 years of age, was my father. 'That sounds good,' thought my father, 'but I shall be late for my art class. I must go — but I'll be back tomorrow to hear more of Islam.' Tomorrow came, he went along to hear more — but no speaker was there. He might have been told to keep his lectures to himself — I don't know. At any rate, whatever the cause, it was a loss to my father. He never saw the speaker again, for in those days Islam was unheard of and he had missed his chance. Some years passed, my father married and eventually went to Woking, in Surrey, to live, over 200 miles from where he lived as a boy, and from where he had heard of Islam.

"He settled down in Woking and started to raise a family. One day, while looking through a local paper, he read these

words, 'What is Islam?' The lines went on to say a lecture would be held on the following Sunday at 3 p.m. in the Mosque at Woking. On Sunday up went my father and listened to a speaker saying, 'There is no God but One God. We are born sinless, not *sinful*. We revere all prophets; we do not leave Jesus out; he is our prophet, and all your prophets are our prophets. But we want you to accept our prophet as well. Muhammad, who was the final prophet with a final message, the Qur'án, 'the revealed book which will suffice for all".' ('What a simple religion,' thought my father. 'No having to be washed in the blood of the lamb to be saved.')

"My father went for many Sundays; he became great friends with those fine people from the East, who would lecture every Sunday (in the year 1914) and who sacrificed all for the call of Islam. (For you must know many local people were very hostile to these people for daring to come from a strange country and with a strange religion; that was too much for many.) My father then took the whole family to listen to those wonderful wise men from the East — that is how I thought of them when I was a small child; for they were three men and wore wonderful turbans. To me they *were* three wise men from the East, just as I had seen pictures of the wise men from the East looking for a cradle in which rested a baby. So to me as a child these three men — Nur Ahmad, Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din and Maulavi Sadr-ud-Din, were from that picture.

Munshi *Nur Ahmad, the* Khwaja *Kamal-ud-Din and the* Maulana *Sadrud Din.*

"When I grew older I felt they were truly the three wise men from the East who had forsaken all to follow a star, the star of Islam, and to find a cradle for Islam, to nurse and cherish Islam and watch it grow up in a strange land, and the cradle they found was the Mosque, Woking. Here they nursed and cherished

Islam — the first and only mosque in England — where the word of Islam pealed forth and the call to prayers was heard in the year 1914. Well, back again to my father. Was it fate that after all those years my father should go to live in the one and only town in England where Islam was being preached and the cry of unity was heard? What a strange coincidence!

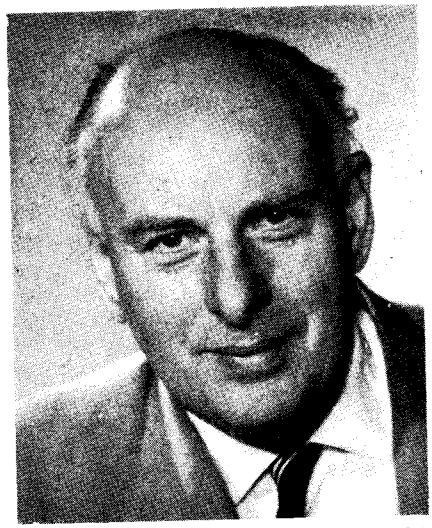
"This person was meant to hear Islam, but not he alone; his family was also meant to hear, and it did. When my mother was asked her feelings about Islam she said, 'I always believed in the truths of Islam. I have not altered; I always believed in one God. Most people do in their heart of hearts.' As for myself, in this year 1961 I stood in the Mosque grounds, looking at 4,000 people gathered together for the *'Id al-Fitr* — the festival celebrating the breaking of the fast. (In Islam two great festivals are held — one to remember Abraham, ready to sacrifice his son, the other as already mentioned, to celebrate the breaking of the one month of fasting.)

"Yes, 4,000 people gathered together, some to hear about Islam, others to say prayers and praise God. Well, thought I, truly those three wise men who left their homes and families have been rewarded (only Maulavi Sadr-ud-Din remains to hear of this wonderful event), for these men and myself had seen only a few hundred gathered together for an 'Id day — and now thousands! God bless those pioneers who started Islam over here! Islam, the simple religion.

"Just God the father, are we not all His sons? And a holy spirit, let us hope it is with us all. Yes, we can believe we are all sons of God. And we are. But three ones are three — to a Muslim — three ones can never make one. Jesus never said, 'I am God' — *never*. I sometimes feel sorry for the clergymen on the television every evening, as they seem to contradict themselves. But, God bless them, they do such wonderful things to help and cheer the poor and needy. They are true Muslims in their actions. I respect them, but they seem to all differ about the status of Jesus. To some he is a man, to some the Son of God, to others God. I am not making fun of them, Islam forbids this. I truly respect them. But I hope the time will come when Islam will be heard every night over the television as well in England. The time will come — I know it will. Until then, just go along, each man preaching Islam. Each man is a preacher. Islam has no priests or confession boxes. God is our confession box.

"And so I end with the Muslim greeting — *Assalamu 'alaikum* (meaning 'Peace be with you!'). What could be better?"

OLIVE TOTO.



R. L. Mellema (Netherlands).

"I began with my study of Eastern languages at the University of Leiden in 1919 and attended the lectures of Professor C. Snouck Hurgronje, the well-known Arabist. I learned Arabic, read and translated al-Baidáwi's commentary on the Qur'án and al-Ghazáli's reflections on the Law. I studied the history and institutions of Islam from European handbooks, as was usual at that time. In 1921 I stayed in Cairo for one month and visited the al-Azhar University. Besides Arabic I studied other languages such as Sanskrit, Malay and Javanese. In 1927 I left for the then Netherlands Indies to teach Javanese languages and Indian cultural history at a special secondary school for advanced studies in Jigjakarta. For fifteen years I specialized myself in Javanese languages and culture (old and modern) and had little contact with Islam and no contact at all with Arabic.

"After a difficult period which I spent as a Japanese prisoner of war, I went back to the Netherlands in 1946 and found a new task at the Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam. Here I had the opportunity again to take up my study of Islam, being instructed to write a short guide on Islam in Java. I became more and more attracted to Islam, to which my contact with the Ahmadiyyah movement in Holland was not foreign. I started to study the new Islamic State of Pakistan. My studies ultimately led me on a journey to Pakistan in the winter of 1954/55. Having come to

know Islam till then from European writers only, in Lahore I came to learn of quite another aspect of Islam. I asked my Muslim friends to be allowed to take part with them in the Friday prayers in the mosques, and from now on I began to discover the great values of Islam. I have felt mysef a Muslim from the moment I had to address the people in one of the Lahore mosques and had to shake hands with innumerable new friends and brothers. I wrote about this event in an article, published in the *Pakistan Quarterly,* Vol. V, No. 4, 1955, in the following lines :

> "'We were now to visit a much smaller mosque, where the sermon was delivered by a scholar who spoke English fluently and had a position of eminence at the University of the Punjab. He informed the congregation that he had deliberately interspersed more English words than usual in his sermon, as he thought that their brother who had come from a far country, the Netherlands, would then understand the Urdu discourse more easily. The sermon was followed by the usual recitation of two *rak'ahs* under the leadership of the Imam. This done, a few more *rak'ahs* were performed in silence by those who felt the need to do so.
>
> "'I was about to leave when the Imam, turning to me, observed that the assembly expected me to say a few words. He himself would translate them into Urdu. I went and stood before the microphone and quietly started to speak. I said how I had come from a far-away country where only a few Muslims live, whose greetings I conveyed to the brothers present in the mosque, who for the last seven years were so fortunate as to have their own Muslim State. In these few years the new State had succeeded in consolidating its position. After a difficult beginning they could undoubtedly look forward to a prosperous future. I promised them that, back in my country, I should bear witness to the great kindness and hospitality it had been my privilege to receive from all sections of the Muslim population in Pakistan. These words having been translated into Urdu had a wonderful effect, for, to my intense surprise, without even realizing at first what was happening, I saw hundreds of worshippers hasten forward to press my hands and to congratulate me. Old hands and young hands clasped mine with the most affectionate cordiality. But what struck and touched me most was the great warmth all these eyes radiated. At that moment I felt myself taken up in the great Brotherhood of Islam which extends over the world, and I was indescribably happy.'

"So the people of Pakistan made me understand that Islam was more than just acquaintance with many details of the Law, that belief in the moral values of Islam had to come first and that knowledge should be conditional to reaching faith. On 26th October 1956 I announced the acceptance of Islam in Holland at a meeting of the Friends of Islam, held at the Grand Hotel Krasnapolsky, Amsterdam (*The Islamic Review*, November 1959, p. 46).

"What is now for me the beauty of Islam and what in particular has attracted me to this faith? I will try to give below a short answer to these questions:

(1) The acknowledgment of One Supreme Being, uncomplicated and easy to accept by every reasonable thinking creature: God is He on Whom all depend. He begets not, nor is He begotten and none is like Him. He represents the highest wisdom, the highest strength and the highest beauty. His Charity and Mercy are boundless.

(2) The relation between the Creator of the Universe and His creatures, of whom man has been entrusted with the supreme direction, is a direct one. The believer does not need any mediation; Islam does not need priesthood. In Islam contact with God depends on man himself. Man has to prepare himself in this life for the next. He is responsible for his deeds, which cannot be compensated by a substituting sacrifice of an innocent person. No soul shall be burdened beyond its capacity.

(3) The doctrine of tolerance in Islam is clearly manifested in the well-known words: *There is no compulsion in religion.* A Muslim is recommended to search for the truth where he may find it; also he is enjoined to estimate the good properties of other religions.

(4) The doctrine of brotherhood in Islam extends to all human beings, no matter what colour, race or creed. Islam is the only religion which has been able to realize this doctrine in practice. Muslims wherever in the world they are will recognize each other as brothers. The equality of the whole of mankind before God is symbolized significantly in the *ihrám* dress during the Pilgrimage to Mecca.

(5) The fact that Islam accepts matter and mind both as existing values. The mental growth of man is connected inseparably with the needs of the body, whereas man has to behave in such a way that mind prevails over matter and matter is controlled by mind.

(6) The prohibition of alcoholic drinks and narcotic drugs. This in particular is a point in respect of which it may be said that Islam is far ahead of its time."

R. L. MELLEMA.

(*The Islamic Review*, July 1960.)

"I was brought up by my parents to be a Catholic, and I was sent to a Catholic school. Here one was thrashed if one was inattentive or backward in one's religious studies. At first I was very impressed, but as time went on I began to wonder about the rights of the all-powerful priests who could dispense God's blessings as they pleased, and also the forgiveness of sins was regulated by the priests. There was also such a confusion of saints that God Himself appeared unapproachable except through a maze of others who had to be appeased or invoked. After I left school, I gave up trying to be a Catholic. I had to work alternate Sundays, and on my days off I always found something more attractive to do.

"During the war I was at sea visiting many Muslim countries; the crews on the ships were also Muslims. Their fortitude in the face of danger, and their general behaviour, impressed me very much. Later, after five years in the East and Africa, I returned to England. There I felt the urge to lead a better life, but felt the Catholic religion was empty, or lacking in something, and remembering my many Muslim friends, I determined to study Islam. Eventually I found an English interpretation of the Qur'án by Sale, which was rather confusing as he is very bigoted and writes in a very difficult style of English, but I thought to myself there is something here if only I could understand it.

"In 1950 I returned to Malaya for two years. On inquiring about Islam in Singapore, I was thwarted by suspicion and could get nowhere. Towards the end of my tour I had found a good friend in a Malay, Abuchik Bin Shaffi, who took me to many places not usually visited by Europeans. With him I visited his home village outside Malacca, where I found the real Muslim way of life in practice. This experience convinced me that Islam was the

truth ; it embraced a way of life as well as beliefs that stood up to reason. Not as I had been used to, a series of statements that must be believed and not questioned. Alas, my time was short, and there was no one I knew of to turn to for information about Islam. Abuchik, though good-hearted, was not a scholar, and there were language difficulties between us.

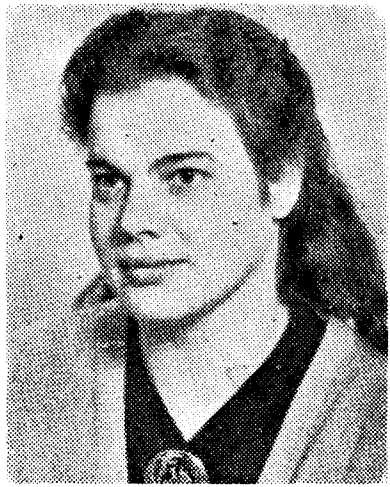
"On my return to England I was determined to find a favourable translation of the Holy Qur'án ; this I did in London. It was a translation by the late Maulana Muhammad 'Ali. On reading through it I wrote to him in Lahore. I received a very nice letter from Lahore saying that the Maulana was dead, but advising me to get in touch with the Mosque at Woking. This I did, and I was invited to a meeting at Victoria in London. I attended the meeting, and after due consideration I made a formal affirmation accepting the Unity of God and the Prophethood of Muhammad. Since that time I have made several visits to the Mosque at Woking, and many visits to the meeting-house at Victoria, London, S.W.1. These visits were most enjoyable, as there was a congenial company, and I always learnt something new, either about Islam, or the Islamic peoples and countries. The friendly spirit of these meetings was most impressive.

"The brotherhood of men in Islam is very real, when you have experienced the differences, the prejudices of colour, nationality, breeding, social standing and educational standards, to say nothing of religious bigotry. The freedom of the mind, as often stressed by Mr. Abdul Majid (Editor of *The Islamic Review),* lies in the freedom from superstition which is the self-imposed curse of so many peoples, even of those who call themselves advanced or civilized.

"There is also the freedom to study and subject one's fancies without having to consult an index such as the Roman Catholics have. Again, one is exhorted to study ; after all, the more one attacks Islam, the more one becomes convinced of its truth. No other religion can convert its attackers as Islam can if it is attacked with impartial reasoning."

H. S. LEWIN (England).

(*The Islamic Review,* July-August 1958.)



Fatimah J. B. Katergi-van der Grijn (Netherlands).

" Born a Dutch Christian, I lived in Indonesia several years before and after the Second World War, where I made acquaintance with Muslim people. Gradually I saw the Islamic conception of life and the difference between Islam and other religions. Islam reveals itself as the solution of the spiritual and social problems in our divided world. Not only is Islam a religion in the spiritual sense, but in the practical sense as well. God is not a reserved god for a religious service, but God is always and everywhere within ourselves and around us. God's light warms our heart. Islam appeals directly to human nature and is able to provide us with contentment, which is so necessary for our restless souls.

" I was wondering whether a person living in one of the darkest places of our earth — up till now unaware of any religion — would be able to enter into the Paradise of God or not, and what about the preceding inhabitants of the world ? We know there are several religions, one against the other. I did not believe that — when judging his deeds — God would first ask the name of the religion of a person. It was God who gave the answer to this burning question by means of the Qur'án. Every good deed of every person is never in vain.

" I thought that all the prophets had their task in thtis world. Why should the Prophet Jesus be better than the Prophet Buddha? When I can accept the Prophet Jesus, why should I not accept also prophets of other religions, as bringers of divine light? There

was again Islam, which saved me in my profound confusion. Only Islam bestows honours upon all the prophets, who had been sent to the world with a part of the divine truth, till the coming of the great Prophet Muhammad, who received the complete divine revelations. Islam is a religion of progress and has a universal character.

"The Qur'án, which contains the true and complete revelations of God, is a source of divine light and offers beauty and spiritual richness to us. Gradually the change took place in myself; I studied and discussed a lot of questions with persons, who gave me their help to find the right path, and finally on 9th March 1955 I embraced Islam at the hands of Mr. S. M. Tufail, M.A., whom I cannot thank enough for his guidance.

"When seeking the light of God I never acted under compulsion. I embraced Islam by my own free will and felt that it is true!

"'We have indeed revealed clear messages! And God guides whom He pleases to the right way' (The Qur'án, 24:26)."

FATIMAH J. B. KATERGI-VAN DER GRIJN (Netherlands).

(*The Islamic Review*, March-April 1960.)

وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلٰوةِ ۚ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخٰشِعِينَ

"And seek assistance through patience and prayer, and surely it is a hard thing except for the humble ones" (The Qur'án, 2 : 45).

J. F. Ruxton (Scotland).

"When I embraced the faith of Islam, I was given the Muslim name of 'Siddiq'. I should be the first to acknowledge my unworthiness of such an honourable name, but its meaning and all that it stands for holds a special significance for me, because I have, for many years, been searching for the truth *(Sidq),* and now I can positively believe that with God's blessing I have found it, in its deepest meaning, in Islam.

> 'And whoever obeys God and the Messenger, they are with those upon whom God has bestowed favours from among the prophets and the truthful and the faithful and the righteous, and a goodly company are they' (The Qur'án, 4 : 69).

"I was brought up in the Christian faith as a Scottish Presbyterian, not a particularly religious family, just of normal education, attending church, Sunday School and Bible classes each Sunday. But I remember we learned the Books of the Bible, the Old Testament, and read them, much as we would read old and ancient stories. But in ordinary weekday life, religion or the Bible was seldom discussed in our conversation. But as I grew up I began to question a lot of those 'stories'. Doubts came to my mind as to their authenticity. Why this? Why that? Did God really want me to believe and have blind faith in all that the Bible contained, without any reasoning or questioning on my part? If

so, what use to me was my intellect and mind? And then there were all the different schisms in Christianity. Was the truth to be found in the Presbyterian Church, or in Roman Catholicism, or any of the many other divisions, all seeming to oppose each other? I'm afraid I felt quite lost, or for a number of years I went through life in a very cynical and worldly frame of mind.

"My profession is that of a private male nurse. My work in hospitals, private homes and travelling abroad has brought me face to face with life and death and suffering. What did it all mean? Did we just come into this world, live a short time, die, and that was the end? No, I always did believe truthfully that there is God who cares for us, and I never gave up the belief that was born in me, that He sent Jesus to guide and teach. But I did not believe in his Divinity, bodily resurrection, or that he could come back to this very worldly and material earth. If he did return, would the Christian Church with all its divisions receive and acknowledge him? I believe not.

"It is very evident without any doubt whatsoever that there is law, rule and reason in the workings of nature. One Almighty Power must have a place for everything and everything in its place. And we are told that all these things are here on this earth for man's benefit. Who are we to attempt to upset God's handiwork? So it becomes crystal clear that there must be a right law, proper rules and correct reasoning for man's life and behaviour.

"Now I have at last found that God, through our Prophet Muhammad, has given us, in the Qur'án, everything we need in the way of law, rules and guidance, and especially reasoning, by which we can perceive the truth — *Sidq* — sometimes signifying 'That which is right'. A revealing verse in the Qur'án says:

> 'Is it a wonder to the people that We have revealed to a man from among themselves saying Warn the people and give good news to those who believe that for them is *advancement in excellence* with their Lord" (10 : 2).

Qadama Sidqin may also be translated as meaning "a footing in firmness'. I believe it was Providence that led me into Islam, in an unexpected way.

"I was called to nurse a Persian patient who was dying of cancer. He was a Muslim. He suffered mental and physical pain to an extent I have never witnessed before, but he always had a smile and faith in his God, and asked to hold his Qur'án just before he died. I was indeed very proud to have known him. Later on

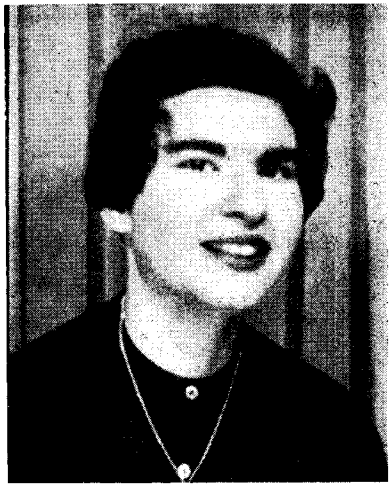
I wished to visit his grave, but did not know where in Brookwood Cemetery it was situated. I was advised to enquire of the Imam of the Woking Mosque, who had officiated at the burial. I was made very welcome, and was given literature relating to Islam, which I could read at my leisure. I seemed to realize then that the Hand of God was in all this. I felt compelled somehow to return for further visits, and got more books, had talks, and asked questions. Then I saw and started to read the Qur'án. Herein were answered all my questioning. It is awe-inspiring, but so undoubtedly to be recognized as the truth.

"On 28th September 1958 I formally embraced the faith of Islam. Amongst the Muslims I have found many real friends, and my life and work is now more full and has meaning and purpose. In saying my prayers five times daily I never have that feeling now of being alone. God is always present to help and guide me. In my search for the truth I find in the Qur'án the following verses :

> 'The Book (the Qur'án) there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who keep their duty : who believe in the unseen and keep up prayer and spend out of what we have given them. And who believe in that which has been revealed to thee, and of the Hereafter they are sure. These are on the right course from their Lord and these it is that are successful' (2 : 2-5)."

J. F. RUXTON (Scotland).

(*The Islamic Review*, June 1959.)



Margaret Marcus (U.S.A.).

"I trace the beginning of my interest in Islam when as a child of ten, while attending a reform Jewish Sunday School, I became fascinated in the historical relationship between the Jews and the Arabs. From my Jewish textbooks I learned that Abraham was the father of the Arabs as well as the Jews. In these same books I read how centuries later when in medieval Europe, Christian persecution made their lives intolerable, the Jews were welcomed in Muslim Spain, and that it was this same Arabic-Islamic civilization which stimulated Hebrew culture to reach its highest peak of achievement. At that time, completely unaware of the true nature of Zionism, I naïvely thought the Jews were returning to Palestine to strengthen their close ties of kinship in religion and culture with their Semetic cousins. Together I believed the Jews and the Arabs would co-operate and achieve another Golden Age of culture in the Middle East.

"Despite my fascination with the study of Jewish history, I was extremely unhappy at the Sunday School. At this time I identified myself strongly with the Jewish people and their horrible fate under the Nazis and I was shocked and pained that none of my fellow classmates took their religion seriously. For instance, during religious services at the synagogue the children would read comic strips hidden in their prayer books and make fun of the rituals. The children were so noisy and disorderly the teachers found it almost impossible to conduct the classes. Meanwhile I delved into

the stories of Jesus in the New Testament and was puzzled why so great a prophet who led such a beautiful and noble life had been rejected by his own people. Perhaps my classmates' complete lack of respect for their teachers was justified. I found them narrow-minded and bigoted, emphasizing their hatred and fear of Christians far more than their love for Judaism.

"At home the atmosphere for religious observance was scarcely more congenial. On the Jewish High Holy Days instead of attending synagogue I felt it blasphemous that my sister and I were taken out of school to go out on picnics and parties. When I told my parents how miserable I was at the reform Jewish Sunday School, they joined an agnostic humanistic organization known as the Ethical Culture Movement.

"The Ethical Culture Movement was founded in the late 19th century by Felix Adler. While studying for the rabbinate, Felix Adler became convinced that devotion to ethical values as relative and man-made regarding any supernaturalism or theology as irrelevant, constituted the only religion fit for the modern world. I attended the Ethical Culture School for five years. Here I grew into complete accord with the ideas of the movement and looked upon all traditional organized religions with scorn.

"Throughout my adolescence I remained under the influence of humanistic philosophy until after graduation from secondary school, when I chose to study at the university a course entitled "Judaism in Islam". My professor was a Rabbi who tried to convince his students — all Jews — that Islam was derived from Judaism. Our textbook took each verse from the Qur'án, painstakingly tracing it to its allegedly Jewish sources. His lectures were liberally illustrated with films and coloured slides in praise of Zionism and the State of Israel. Although his real aim was to prove to his students the superiority of Judaism over Islam, he convinced me of just the opposite. As I plunged deeper and deeper into the study of the Old Testament and the Qur'án, the contrast between the two scriptures became increasingly evident. In a sense the Old Testament could almost be considered a history of the Jews as God's special chosen people. Although the Qur'án was revealed in Arabic to an Arab Prophet, its message is a universal one directed to the entire human race.

"When my professor explained that the divine right of the Jews to Palestine has always been a central theme of Judaism, I was instantly repelled by such a narrow-minded conception of God. Does not the Qur'án say that "to God belongs the East and the West; wherever ye turn there is His face?" Did not the Prophet Muhammad say that the whole earth is a mosque? Zionism

preaches that only in Palestine can the Jew feel at home and elsewhere he is living in exile. The claim of my professor that only in Palestine could the Jews make their contribution to human civilization seemed baseless when I pondered over the fact that Moses received his revelation in Egypt, the most important parts of the *Talmud* were written in what is now Iraq, and some of the most beautiful Hebrew poetry was composed in Muslim Spain. The rigid exclusiveness of Judaism I felt had a great deal of connection with the persecutions the Jews have suffered throughout their history. Perhaps this would never have happened if the Jews had competed vigorously with the other faiths for converts. Zionism is a combination of the rascist tribalistic aspects of Judaism with modern secular nationalism. Zionism was further discredited in my eyes when I discovered that Israeli leaders such as David Ben-Gurion are not observant Jews and that perhaps nowhere in the world is orthodox Judaism regarded with such contempt as in Israel! The Zionists have made the worst aspects of Western materialistic philosophy their very own. Only a complete rejection of all moral and spiritual values could account for such a systematic uprooting of an entire people from their homeland and an utter disregard of any sense of justice. When I found that nearly all important Jewish leaders supported Zionism and felt not the slightest twinge of conscience for the terrible wrong inflicted on the Arabs, I could no longer consider myself a Jew at heart.

"At the same time my professor convinced me that ethical values had a divine origin and were the absolute eternal truth. I could not understand how people like my parents could cherish moral and spiritual values and then consider their theological foundations irrelevant. If morals were purely man-made, they could be changed at will according to whim, convenience or circumstance. Belief in the hereafter I came to feel as essential not merely because it was comforting. If ethical and spiritual values are of divine origin, we are directly responsible to God for developing our highest potentialities. Each one of us will be called upon to render an account of our life on earth and be rewarded or punished accordingly. Therefore one who has a firm faith in the hereafter is willing to sacrifice transitory pleasures and endure hardship to attain lasting good.

"As I studied the beliefs of all the major faiths, I came to the conclusion that originally all the great religions were one, but as time passed they became corrupted. Idol worship, the idea of reincarnation, and the caste system began to permeate Hinduism, passivity became characteristic of Buddhism, ancestor worship of Confucianism, the doctrine of original sin, the Trinity, the divinity of Jesus resulting in an anthropormorphic conception of God and

the atonement by the death on the cross, of Christianity and the exclusive chosen people idea of Judaism. All these ideas which so repelled me were not to be found in Islam. Increasingly I began to feel that Islam was the original religion that alone had retained its purity. Other religions were only partially true. Only Islam contained the whole truth. Above all, Islam provided its adherents with a complete comprehensive way of life in which the relation of the individual to society and the material to the spiritual were balanced into a perfect harmony.

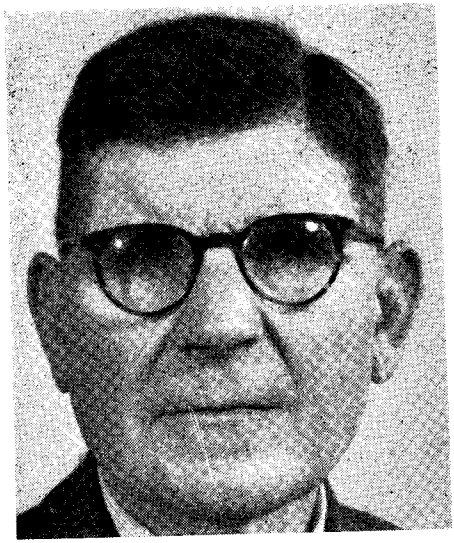
"Although I wanted to become a Muslim, my family managed to argue me out of it. I was warned that Islam would complicate my life since the faith is not part of the American scene. I was told that Islam would alienate me from my family and isolate me from the community. At that time my faith was not sufficiently strong to withstand these pressures. I became so ill I had to discontinue college. For a long time I remained at home under private medical care, steadily growing worse. In desperation my parents had me confined to a hospital, where I stayed for more than two years. While in the hospital I vowed that if I recovered I would become a Muslim.

"After I was finally allowed to go home, discharged, I investigated all the opportunities for meeting Muslims in New York City and making friendships, and it was my pleasure to make the acquaintance of some of the finest people that anyone could ever hope to meet. I also began to write articles for Muslim magazines and to carry on an extensive correspondence with Muslim leaders all over the world.

"As Ramadhan approached my desire to embrace Islam grew so strong that I began to practise the five daily prayers, and am now undertaking the fast for the first time. I am doing this with a firm belief that nothing but good can result in living according to my deepest convictions."

(Miss) MARGARET MARCUS.

(*The Islamic Review*, April 1961.)



H. F. Fellowes (England).

"I have spent most of my life in the Royal Navy, which includes service at sea in both the 1914 and 1939 wars. At sea you cannot escape from the immense forces of nature even with powerful and efficient 20th century machinery and apparatus. Simple examples are fog and gales. In wartime there are additional hazards. There is a book in constant use called *Queen's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions.* This book defines the duties of every officer and man. It specifies the rewards in the form of promotion, awards for good conduct, pay and pensions. It details the maximum punishments for offences against naval discipline and it covers every other aspect of life within the service. By obeying the instructions contained in this book a large number of men have been united to form a happy, efficient and disciplined service.

"If I may say so without disrespect or irreverence, the Qur'án is a similar book but on an immeasurably higher plane. It is the instructions of Almighty God to every man, woman and child on this earth.

"For the past eleven years I have been a flower grower. This happens to be another occupation which demonstrates man's dependence on God. If you work in accordance with God's orders He helps you and your plants prosper. If you disregard His laws,

plant failures are the reward. Trained men issue weather forecasts but not infrequently they prove incorrect.

"I am convinced that the Qur'án is the Word of God and that He chose the Prophet Muhammad to repeat His Word to the whole world. Islam harmonizes with the life in this world. It is simple and straightforward, free from elaborations which cannot be believed. This form of worship reflects this honest sincerity. Even so, born and bred a Christian in a Christian country, the Christian tradition becomes so firmly embedded that to forsake it requires considerable persuasion. In this connection I must make it clear that the persuasion came from within myself. Although my questions were answered nobody ever even suggested that I should become a Muslim.

"The fundamental beliefs of both Islam and Christianity are the same. A further examination is therefore necessary. Because Martin Luther believed that the Christian Church had retained many pagan rites and beliefs he started a revolt which led to the Reformation and the foundation of the Protestant Church. When her country was threatened by Roman Catholic Spain and, at the same time, Central Europe was threatened by the advancing Ottoman Empire, Queen Elizabeth I identified the cause of Islam with that of Protestantism on the ground of their common hostility to idolatry. It would not be correct to maintain that Martin Luther was unaware or ignorant of the fact that some nine centuries earlier, under Divine guidance, the Prophet Muhammad had reformed, purified and perfected not only the Christian religion but also all other revealed religions. Martin Luther had studied the Qur'án. Yet the Reformation by no means eliminated all the pagan beliefs and ceremonies from Christianity. What it did was to inaugurate a period of cruelty and intolerance which to some extent endures to the present day. It is noteworthy that at a time when the Spanish Inquisition was most vicious Islam demonstrated its tolerance. The Turks gave asylum to persecuted Jews in Spain.

"Jesus said that we were to obey the Ten Commandments given to Moses on Mount Sinai. The First Commandment, 'I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have none other gods but Me,' is comprised by the Doctrine of Atonement. Loyalty to Jesus Christ is prized more highly than loyalty to God because Jesus Christ can intercede for us on the Day of Resurrection. Yet Christians believe that Jesus Christ is God Incarnate. My conception of God has always been that He directs everything, knows everything and that He is infinitely Kind, Forgiving, Merciful and Just. Man can

therefore be absolutely sure that he will be fairly judged and that all extenuating circumstances will be considered.

"In this life you expect to be held responsible for your own behaviour. If you are an accountant and falsify your employer's accounts you will be sent to prison. If you drive a motor car too fast on a twisting slippery road you will have an accident, and so on. To blame somebody else for your own misdeeds is considered to be cowardly. I do not believe that we were born miserable sinners. It is my experience that normal people like to please others unless they come across an unpleasant individual. Children value the opinion of their parents and schoolteachers. Adults who are respected by their fellows also respect the responsibilities of those in authority over them, and they take pleasure in helping their neighbours. There are times when for some reason or another we are seized by a mutinous impulse and inflict damage on somebody or something. The frequency and degree of these outbreaks varies. When we do this we sin. Organized games are another example. If a player breaks a rule the referee penalizes him. Bearing these considerations in mind the Doctrine of Atonement becomes confusing and incomprehensible.

"The Second Commandment starts: 'Thou shalt not make for thyself any graven image," and later it says, 'Thou shalt not bow down nor worship them'. There are churches and cathedrals littered with images before which some people actually bow down. I have often wondered why the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus made no immediate impression at the time on the residents of Palestine whether Jews, Romans or others. As far as secular history is concerned Jesus' life seems to have escaped notice. At school I was only taught the Bible version. It also took, against strong opposition, several centuries before Christianity spread and became established. The history of the Prophet Muhammad and the triumph and the amazing speed with which Islam was spread was taught at school. No reference was made to the spiritual side of Islam.

"Between 1919 and 1923 I served in ships employed in Turkish waters. This stimulated an interest in Islam. The elemental declaration 'There is no god but God and Muhammad is His Messenger' compels attention. I bought books about it. Most of them were prejudiced against Islam. The behaviour of the Caliphs during the previous three centuries and the corruption of Turkish politicians and government officials cast an unfavourable light on Islam. Gradually I let the matter drop. I retained a profound faith in God but it was entirely passive,

"A year or so ago I began investigating the subject again. I wrote to the Woking Muslim Mission at Woking and I was supplied with books by Muslim authors. These books exposed Western misconceptions, distortions and inventions and explained why and how they had arisen. They showed that Islam is reawakening and that there are constructive movements actively restoring Islam to its original purity in the light of present-day progress and scientific knowledge with which Islam is in complete harmony.

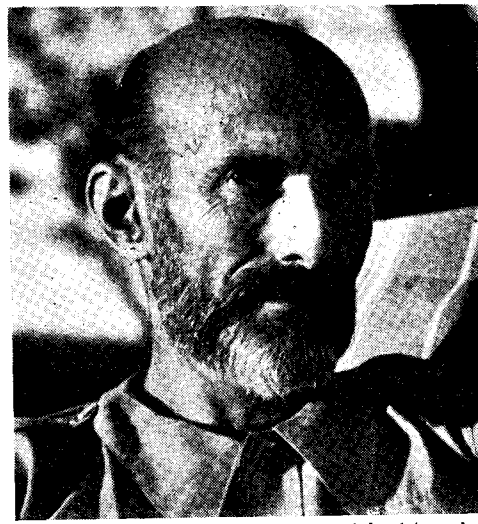
"Recently newspapers have been reporting statements by philosophers and authors to the effect that present religions are obsolete. This reflects the scepticism of the mass of Western peoples in the complexities and ambiguities of the Christian religion. These would-be reformers are again making the same mistake as Martin Luther. Islam, the complete answer, is still here.

"It is a paradox that if you never go near a church nobody thinks anything about it. If you become a Muslim, you are liable to be considered eccentric, to say the least.

"To sum up, I have become a Muslim because Islam is the only true religion in theory, in practice and in all other respects. Doubts and misgivings are swept away by a feeling inside me that Islam is unquestionably 'the Right Path' on which we ask God 'to guide us' and that it will remain eternally the Right Path."

H. F. FELLOWES.

(*The Islamic Review*, February 1960.)



'Umar Baron Ehrenfels (Austria).

Born as the only son of the late Baron Christian Ehrenfels, the founder of modern structural (*Gestalt*) psychology in Austria, Rolf Freiherr von Ehrenfels felt already as a child a deep attraction towards the East generally and the world of Islam in particular. His sister, the Austrian poetess Imma von Bodmershof, described this phase in her contribution to *Islamic Literature*, Lahore, 1953. As a young man Ehrenfels travelled in the Balkan countries and Turkey, where he used to join prayers in the mosques, though a Christian, and was hospitably accepted by Turkish, Albanian, Greek and Yugoslav Muslims. On one occasion a Yugoslav Imam, by the name of Abdullah, suggested to contact his namesake, the Imam of the then newly-constructed mosque at Berlin, Dr. S. M. Abdullah. This done, literary contributions to the *Moslemische Revue*, edited by Dr. S. M. Abdullah and Dr. Hamid Marcus at Berlin, and soon also personal contacts developed, and in its consequence Ehrenfels accepted Islam in 1927 and took on *Umar* as his Muslim name. He travelled in 1932 with Dr. S. M. Abdullah in the regions of the present Pakistan and India, where he took particular interest in the culture-historical problems connected with the status and position of women. After his return to Austria, Baron Umar specialized in the study of anthropological problems of Matrilineal Civilizations in India. The Oxford University Press published his first anthropological book (Osmania University Series, Hyderabad-Deccan, 1941) on this subject.

When Austria was overrun by the Nazis in 1938, Baron Umar went again to India as the guest of the late Maulana Muhammad Ali of Lahore and later worked in Hyderabad at the invitation of the late Sir Akbar Hydari. During the war he translated works by the late Hazrat Amir, Maulana Muhammad Ali, into the German language, *cf.. The Prophet of Islam, The New World Order*, and also pursued anthropological field-work in South India and, with the support of the Wenner-Gren Foundation, New York, in Assam. Since 1949 he has been Head of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Madras and was awarded the S. C. Roy Golden Medal for original contributions to Social and Cultural Anthropology by the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1949. His numerous scientific and Islamic publications also include an illustrated two-volume work on Indian and General Anthropology, "Ilm-ul-Aqwam" (Anjuman Tarraqqi-i-Urdu, Delhi, 1941), and a tribal monograph on the "Kadar of Cochin" (Madras 1952).

Below he outlines those main features of Islam which most attracted him to this great religion.

"The essentials of Islam are as follows:

"(1) The Islamic teaching of successive revelation implies in my opinion the following: The source from which all the great world

religions sprang as one. The founders of these great paths, prepared for peace-seeking mankind, gave witness to one and the same basic divine teaching. Acceptance of one of these paths means search for Truth in Love, but it does *not* imply the rejection of any other path, *i.e.*, another religion.

"(2) Islam in essence means peace in submission to the Eternal Law.

"(3) Islam is, historically speaking, the last founded among the great world religions on this planet.

"(4) The Prophet Muhammad, as the founder of Islam, is thus the last in the sequence of great religious world prophets.

"(5) The acceptance of Islam and the path of the Muslims by a member of an older religion thus means as little rejection of his former religion, as for instance the acceptance of Buddha's teachings meant the rejection of Hinduism to the Indian co-nationals of Buddha. It was only later that schools of thought within Hinduism rejected the Buddhist way as heretical. The differences of religions are man-made. The unity is divine. The teachings of the Holy Qur'án stress this basic unity. To witness it means acceptance of a spiritual fact which is common to all men and women.

"(6) The spirit of human brotherhood under the all-encompassing divine fatherhood is much stressed in Islam and not hampered by concepts of racialism, or sectarianism otherwise; be it of linguistic, historico-traditionalistic, or even dogmatic nature.

"(7) This concept of divine fatherly love, however, includes also the motherly aspect of Divine love, as the two principal epitheta of God indicate: *Al-Rahman—Al-Rahim*, both being derived from the Arabic root *R H M*. The symbolic meaning of this root equals Goethe's *Das Ewig-Weibliche zieht uns hinan*, whilst its primary meaning is *womb*.

"In this spirit the Church of Hagia Sophia at Constantinople has been made the principal source from which the great Muslim architects in the Near East took their inspiration when building mosques like that of Sultan Ahmad or Muhammad Fatih at Istanbul.

"In this spirit the Prophet gave these unforgettable words to his followers: 'Paradise lies at the feet of the Mother'."

UMAR ROLF BARON EHRENFELS, Ph.D. (Vienna),
Head of the Department of Anthropology, University of Madras, India.

Five persons were initiated into Islam by S. Muhammad Tufail (Imam of the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, Surrey, England) on the occasion of 'Id al-Fitr *on 28th March 1960. The names of the new entrants were (from right to left): Mr. Woodham (Nigerian), Mr. D. R. Watson, Miss June Hassal, Miss Carol Beakeley and Miss Jessie Gyseman.*

(*The Islamic Review*, March-April 1960.)

PART III

CHAPTER XI

NON-MUSLIMS ON ISLAM AND THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD AND THE CONTRIBUTION OF ISLAM TO CIVILIZATION

". . . From a new angle and with a fresh vigour it (the Arab mind) took up that systematic development of positive knowledge which the Greeks had begun and relinquished. If the Greek was the father, then the Arab was the foster-father of the scientific method of dealing with reality, that is to say, by absolute frankness, the utmost simplicity of statement and explanation, exact record and exhaustive criticism. Through the Arabs it was and not by the Latin route that the modern world received that gift of light and power."—H. G. Wells in his *The Outline of History*, London 1920.

"The Muhammadan law, which is binding on all from the crowned head to the meanest subject, is a law interwoven with a system of the wisest, the most learned and the most enlightened jurisprudence that ever existed in the world."—The English statesman and orator, Edmund Burke (d. 1797).

Napoleon Bonaparte.

" Moses has revealed the existence of God to his nation, Jesus Christ to the Roman world, Muhammad to the old continent. . . .

" Arabia was idolatrous when, six centuries after Jesus, Muhammad introduced the worship of the God of Abraham, of Ishmael, of Moses, and of Jesus. The Aryans and some other sects had disturbed the tranquillity of the East by agitating the question of the nature of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Muhammad declared that there was none but one God Who had no father, no son, and that the Trinity imported the idea of idolatry. . . ." He wrote on the flyleaf of the Qur'án : " There is no god but God."

" Muhammad was a prince ; he rallied his compatriots around him. In a few years the Muslims conquered half of the world. They snatched away more souls from false gods, pulled down more idols, demolished more pagan temples in fifteen years than the followers of Moses and Jesus did in fifteen centuries. Muhammad was a great man. He might have been, in fact, a god, if the revolution which he was instrumental in bringing about had not been prepared by circumstances. When he appeared, the Arabs had been, since many years, afflicted with civil wars. All those nations that have achieved great things have done them when they came out of such ordeals that renewed equally their souls and their bodies. If the battles of Kadesia and (gap in the original MSS) which enabled the intrepid

Muslims to plant the standard of the Prophet on the banks of the Oxus and on the frontiers of China; if those of Ajnadin and Yarmuk, which caused Syria and Egypt to fall under their dominion, were turned against them; if the Khalids, the Zerars and the 'Amrs had been defeated and repelled to their vast deserts, the Arabs would have gone back to their wandering life; they would have lived like their forefathers, poor and miserable; the names of Muhammad, 'Ali and 'Omar would have remained unknown to the world. . . .

"The Parthians, the Scythians, the Mongols, the Tartars and the Turks have generally shown themselves enemies of sciences and arts, but this reproach cannot be fastened on to the Arabs, no more than upon Muhammad. Mu'aviah, the first of the Umayyad Caliphs, was a poet; he granted peace to a rabbi because he had prayed for grace in four beautiful Arabic verses. Yezid, his son, was also a poet. The Muslims attached so much value to this art that they regarded it as equal to bravery. Al-Mansur, Harun al-Rashid and al-Mamun cultivated arts and sciences. They were fond of literature, chemistry and mathematics; they lived with savants, caused the Greek and Latin authors — the Iliad, the Odyssey, the Euclid, etc. — to be translated into Arabic, and founded schools and colleges for medicine, astronomy and moral science. Ahmad corrected the tables of Ptolemy; Abbas was a distinguished mathematician; Costa, Alicude, Thabit and Ahmad measured one degree of meridian from Saana to Kufa. Chemistry, alembics, sun-dials, clocks and the numerical signs owe their existence to Arab invention. Nothing is more elegant than their moral tales; their poetry is full of fervour. Muhammad extolled everywhere the savants and such men as devoted themselves to a speculative life and cultivated letters. If the Arabs have neglected anatomy, that was because of a religious prejudice. (This is not a fact.—Translator.) In the library of Cairo there were 6,000 volumes on astronomy, and more than 100,000 on other subjects; in the library of Cordova there were 300,000 volumes. Sciences and arts reigned five hundred years under the Caliphs and made great progress, which was brought to naught by the invasion of the Mongols. . . .

"Muhammad reduced the number of women which one could marry; before him it was indefinite: the rich used to marry a large number of women. He thus restricted polygamy. Women are not born more in number than men; why then is this permission to man to have more women and why has not Muhammad adopted the law of Jesus in this matter? In Europe the legislators of nations, whether Greek or German, Roman or Gaul, Spanish or British, have never permitted but one wife. Never in the West was polygamy authorized. In the East, on the contrary, it has always been

authorized. Since historic times all men, Jews or Assyrians, Arabs or Persian, Tartars or Africans, could have more wives than one. Some have attributed this difference to geographical conditions. Asia and Africa are inhabited by men of various complexions; polygamy is the only effective means to blend them together, so that the white may not persecute the black, nor the black the white. Polygamy makes them born of the same mother or of the same father ; the black and the white, being brothers, sit and see each other at the same table. In the East, also, colour does not give one superiority to another. But to fulfil this object Muhammad thought that four wives were sufficient. One may ask how it is possible to permit four wives when there are not more women than men. As a matter of fact, polygamy does not exist except among the wealthy class. As it is this class which forms the opinion, the mixture of the colours in these families is sufficient to maintain the union among them.

" If we should like our colonies to give liberty to the black and to get rid of the colour prejudice obtaining in them, our legislators will have to allow polygamy.

" In the East, slavery has never had the same character as in the West ; the slavery of the East is like the one which one finds in the Holy Scriptures. The slave inherits his master's property and marries his daughter. The majority of the Pashas had been slaves. Many of the grand viziers, all the Mamelukes, Ali Ben Mourad Bey, had been slaves. They began their lives by performing the most menial service in the house of their masters and were subsequently raised in status for their merit or by favour. In the West, on the contrary, the slave has always been below the position of the domestic servants ; he occupies the lowest rung. The Romans emancipated their slaves, but the emancipated were never considered as equal to the free-born. The ideas of the East and West are so different that it took a long time to make the Egyptians understand that all the army was not composed of slaves belonging to the Sultan al-Kabir. The father of the family is the first magistrate of his house ; he has absolute rights over his wives, children and slaves. Never does the public administration meddle with what happens in the internal affairs of a house so as to disturb the authority of the father. His wives are sacred and respected, even in civil wars.

" I hope the time is not far off when I shall be able to unite all the wise and educated men of all the countries and establish a uniform régime based on the principles of the Qur'án which alone are true and which alone can lead men to happiness."[1]

But the dream never approached any fulfilment in his life ; whether it will ever be fulfilled in any other person's life, time alone can say.

1 *Bonaparte et l'Islam*, by Cherfils, Paris, France, 1914, pp. 105-125.

" It is to Mussulman science, to Mussulman art, and to Mussulman literature that Europe has been in a great measure indebted for its extrication from the darkness of the Middle Ages."

(Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, *Speeches Delivered in India,* London 1890, p. 24.)

" Never again will the world see so marvellous a spectacle as that which the Arabs afforded during the ninth century. This pastoral people, whom religious enthusiasm had suddenly made masters of half the world, having once founded their empire, immediately set to work to acquire that knowledge of the sciences which was lacking to their greatness. Of all the invaders who competed for the remnants of the Roman Empire, they alone pursued such studies, while the Germanic hordes, priding themselves upon their brutality and ignorance, took a thousand years to reunite the broken chains of traditions, which the Arabs had accomplished in less than half a century. They provoked the competition of the conquered Christians — a healthy competition which secured the harmony of the races . . . At the end of the eighth century, the whole scientific possessions of the Arabs consisted in a translation of one medical treatise and of some books on alchemy. Before the ninth century had run to its close, the Arabs were in possession of all the sciences of the Greeks ; they had produced from their own ranks students of the first order, and they showed from this time onwards an aptitude for the exact sciences, which was lacking in their instructors and whom they henceforth surpasssed."

(Dr. Lucien Leclerc, *Histoire de la Médecine Arabe,* Tome I, pp. 91-92.)

". . . the world owed a great deal to the Saracens for keeping the torch of science and philosophy alight in its dark ages. Aristotle, Euclid, Ptolemy were translated into Arabic and thence into Latin and learning and literature were not suffered to die, until the Renaissance made once again the original fountain-head of thought accessible to the scholars of Europe in their own tongue."

(C. E. Storrs, *Many Creeds: One Cross,* London, 1945, pp. 63-64.)

" Europe was darkened at sunset, Cordova shone with public lamps : Europe was dirty, Cordova built a thousand baths : Europe was covered with vermin, Cordova changed its undergarments daily : Europe lay in mud, Cordova's streets were paved ; Europe's palaces had smoke-holes in the ceiling, Cordova's arabesques were exquisite : Europe's nobility could not sign its name, Cordova's children went to school : Europe's monks could not read the baptismal service, Cordova's teachers created a library of Alexandrian dimensions."

(Victor Robinson, *The Story of Medicine,* p. 164.)

" During the Middle Ages, the history of Mohammedanism is the history of civilization itself. Thanks to the Muslims, Greek science and philosophy were rescued from neglect and came to awaken the West and give rise to the great intellectual movement which terminated in the renovation of Bacon. . . . In the seventh century of our era, the Old World was in agony. The Arabian conquests infused into it a new blood . . . Mohammed gave them (Arabs) the Qur'án which was the starting point of a new culture."

(Stanislas Guyard, *Encyclopédie des Sciences Religieuses,* Paris 1880, Tome IX, p. 501.)

" To seek knowledge is a duty for every Muslim man and woman. Seek knowledge even though it be in China. The savants are the heirs of the Prophets. These profound words of the great reformers are an indisputable contradiction to those who seek and exert themselves in putting the responsibility of the intellectual degradation of Muslims upon the spirit of the Qur'án. Let them read and meditate upon this great Book and they will find in it, at every passage, a constant attack upon idolatry and materialism ; they will read that the Prophet incessantly called the attention and the meditation of his people to the splendid marvels, to the mysterious phenomenon of creation. The incredulous, sceptical and unbelieving may convince

themselves that the importance of this Book and its doctrine was not to throw back, eventually, the intellectual and moral faculties of a whole people. On the contrary, those who have followed its counsels have been, as we have described in the course of this study, the creators of a civilization which is astounding unto this day."

(Dr. A. Bertherand, *Contribution des Arabes au Progrès des Sciences Médicales*, Paris 1883, p. 6.)

"I feel justified, therefore, in my assertion that Islam contains in abundance the necessary principles for its own growth. Indeed it may be said that, until the middle of the thirteenth century, Islam was the vehicle for whatever growth in civilization the western world could boast."

(W. E. Hocking, *The Spirit of World Politics*, New York, 1932, p. 461.)

"The rise of Islam is perhaps the most amazing event in human history. Springing from a land and a people alike previously negligible, Islam spread within a century over half the earth, shattering great empires, overthrowing long-established religions, remoulding the souls of races, and building up a whole new world — the world of Islam.

"The closer we examine this development the more extraordinary does it appear. The other great religions won their way slowly, by painful struggle, and finally triumphed with the aid of powerful monarchs converted to the new faith. Christianity had its Constantine, Buddhism its Asoka, and Zoroastrianism its Cyrus, each lending to his chosen cult the mighty force of secular authority. Not so Islam. Arising in a desert land sparsely inhabited by a nomad race previously undistinguished in human annals, Islam sallied forth on its great adventure with the slenderest human backing and against the heaviest material odds. Yet Islam triumphed with seemingly miraculous ease, and a couple of generations saw the Fiery Crescent borne victorious from the Pyrénées to the Himalayas and from the deserts of Central Asia to the deserts of Central Africa . . . Mohammed, an Arab of the Arabs, was the very incarnation of the soul of his race. Preaching a simple, austere monotheism, free from

priestcraft or elaborate doctrinal trappings, he tapped the well-springs of religious zeal always present in the Semitic heart. Forgetting the chronic rivalries and blood feuds which had consumed their energies in internecine strife, and welded into a glowing unity by the fire of their new-found faith, the Arabs poured forth from their deserts to conquer the earth for Allah, the one true God. . . .

"They (Arabs) were no bloodthirsty savages, bent solely on loot and destruction. On the contrary, they were an innately gifted race, eager to learn and appreciative of the cultural gifts which older civilizations had to bestow. Intermarrying freely and professing a common belief, conquerors and conquered rapidly fused, and from this fusion arose a new civilization — the Saracenic civilization, in which the ancient cultures of Greece, Rome, and Persia were revitalized by the Arab genius and the Islamic spirit. For the first three centuries of its existence (*circ.* A.D. 650-1000) the realm of Islam was the most civilized and progressive portion of the world. Studded with splendid cities, gracious mosques, and quiet universities where the wisdom of the ancient world was preserved and appreciated, the Moslem world offered a striking contrast to the Christian West, then sunk in the night of the Dark Ages."

(A. M. Lothrop Stoddard, Ph.D., *The New World of Islam,* London 1932, pp. 1-3.)

"In the fifth and sixth centuries the civilized world stood on the verge of a chaos. The old emotional cultures that had made civilization possible, since they had given to men a sense of unity and of reverence for their rulers, had broken down, and nothing had been found adequate to take their place. . . .

"It seemed then the great civilization which it had taken four thousand years to construct was on the verge of disintegration, and that mankind was likely to return to that condition of barbarism where every tribe and sect was against the next, and law and order was unknown . . . The old tribal sanctions had lost their power . . . The new sanctions created by Christianity were working division and destruction instead of unity and order. It was a time fraught with tragedy. Civilization, like a gigantic tree whose foliage had overarched the world and whose branches had borne the golden fruits of art and science and literature, stood tottering . . . rotted to the core. Was there any emotional culture that could be brought in to gather mankind once more into unity and to save civilization?"

And then, speaking of Arabia, Mr. Denison says:

"It was among these people that the man was born who was to unite the whole known world of the east and south."

(J. H. Denison, *Emotion as the Basis of Civilization*, London 1928, pp. 265 and 269.)

"But Islam has yet a further service to render to the cause of humanity . . . No other society has such a record of success in uniting in an equality of status, of opportunity, and of endeavour so many and so various races of mankind. The great Muslim communities of Africa, India and Indonesia, perhaps also the small Muslim community in Japan, show that Islam has still the power to reconcile apparently irreconcilable elements of race and tradition. If ever the opposition of the great societies of the East and West is to be replaced by co-operation, the mediation of Islam is an indispensable condition."

(H. A. R. Gibb, *Whither Islam?*, London 1932, p. 379.)

"Besides the institution of the pilgrimage, the payment of the legal alms is another duty that continually reminds the Muslim that 'the faithful are brothers' (49 : 10) — a religious theory that is very strikingly realized in Muhammedan society and seldom fails to express itself in acts of kindness towards the new convert. Whatever be his race, colour or antecedents he is received into the brotherhood of believers and takes his place as an equal among equals."

(T. W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, London 1913, p. 416.)

"One may notice and admire the kind of chivalrous pride which the average Mohameddan takes in his faith."

(The Right Rev. G. A. Lefroy, Bishop of Lahore, *Mankind and the Church*, London 1907, p. 289.)

" Islam is a religion that is essentially rationalistic in the widest sense of this term, considered etymologically and historically. The definition of rationalism as a system that bases religious beliefs on principles furnished by the reason, applies to it exactly. It is true that Muhammad, who was an enthusiast and possessed, too, the ardour of faith and the fire of conviction, that precious quality he transmitted to so many of his disciples, brought forward his reform as a revelation ; but this kind of revelation is only one form of exposition and his religion has all the marks of a collection of doctrines founded on the data of reason. To believers, the Muhammadan creed is summed up in belief in the unity of God and in the Mission of His Prophet, and to ourselves who coldly analyse his doctrines, to belief in God and a future life ; these two dogmas, the minimum of religious belief, statements that to the religious man rest on the firm basis of reason, sum up the whole doctrinal teaching of the Qur'án. The simplicity and the clearness of this teaching are certainly among the most obvious forces at work in the religion and the missionary activity of Islam. It cannot be denied that many doctrines and systems of theology and also many superstitions, from the worship of saints to the use of rosaries and amulets, have become grafted on to the main trunk of the Muslim creed. But in spite of the rich development, in every sense of the term, of the teachings of the Prophet, the Qur'án has invariably kept its place as the fundamental starting point, and the dogma of unity of God has always been proclaimed therein with a grandeur, a majesty, an invariable purity and with a note of sure conviction, which it is hard to find surpassed outside the pale of Islam. This fidelity to the fundamental dogma of the religion, the elemental simplicity of the formula in which it is enunciated, the proof that it gains from the fervid conviction of the missionaries who propagate it, are so many causes to explain the success of Muhammadan missionary effort. A creed so precise, so stripped of all theological complexities and consequently so accessible to the ordinary understanding, might be expected to possess and does indeed possess a marvellous power of winning its way into the consciences of men."

(Edward Montet, *La propagande chrétienne et ses adversaires musulmans*, Paris 1890, pp. 17-18, as quoted by T. W. Arnold in his *The Preaching of Islam*, London 1913, pp. 413-414.)

" Islamism has been and still is a great power in the world. There is much in it that is calculated to purify and elevate mankind at a certain stage in history. It has the power of reclaiming the slaves of a degraded polytheism from their low, grovelling conceptions of God to conceptions which are higher ; it has set an example of sobriety to the world and has shielded its followers from the drink plague which destroys the strength of nations."

(Bishop Boyd Carpenter in his Bampton Lectures, *The Permanent Element in Religion,* p. 43.)

" The workability of Islam is one of the chief reasons for its success in Africa."

(Stephen Gwynn, *The Life of Mary Kingsley,* Harmondsworth 1940, p. 139.)

" It is one of the glories of Islam that temples are not made with hands and that its ceremonies can be performed anywhere upon God's earth or under His heaven."

(Hunter, *Our Indian Musulmans.)*

" Muslim rule was neither oppressive nor unenlightened . . . Further, the Muslims were friends to learning . . . it was not Muslims but monks who burnt the Greek library at Alexandria."

(G. D. H. Cole and M. I. Cole, *The Intelligent Man's Review of Europe Today,* London 1933, p. 31.)

" Islam endows its people with a dignity peculiar to its own . . . It implants a pride of religion in the heart of the believer, and it inspires all with a passionate loyalty to the faith and a deep devotion to the Prophet . . . Direct access to God makes one of the strong appeals of Islam, and in the pagan world it wins a ready response, because it is often what the pagan feels he most needs."

(W. Wilson Cash, *The Expansion of Islam,* London 1928, p. 177.)

" Most pleasing also is the dignity which the Muslim develops through his religion, his attitude is one of noble religious pride which is never transformed into vanity."

(Friedrich Delitzsch, *Die Welt des Islam,* p. 133.)

" A religion which is not content with being a theory adapted to the aspirations of our human nature, nor with fixing a code of sublime precepts which may or may not be applied, but which also provides a code of life, establishes the fundamental principles of our morality on a systematic and positive base, precisely formulates the duties of man towards himself and towards others by means of rules which are capable of evolution and compatible with the widest intellectual development, and which gives its laws a Divine sanction, surely deserves our most profound admiration, as its influence is continual and solitary on man."

(Laura Veccia Vaglieri, *Apologie de l'Islamisme*, p. 88.)

" Islam had the power of peacefully conquering souls by the simplicity of its theology, the clearness of its dogma and principles, and the definite number of the practices which it demands. In contrast to Christianity which has been undergoing continual transformation since its origin, Islam has remained identical with itself."

(Jean L'heureux, *Etude sur l'Islamisme*, p. 35.)

" The Islamic brotherhood which they proclaimed was a real thing, and a new thing among Eastern nations. It is doubtful whether Christian Syrians ever felt the same sense of brotherhood with Christian Persians as Muslim Syrians did with Muslim Persians."

(Lawrence E. Browne, *The Prospects of Islam*, London 1944, p. 12.)

" The brotherhood of Islam, which thus played an important part in the early conquests, is one of the most important things in Islam . . . "

(*Ibid.*, p. 13.)

" Everyone should know the fundamental facts about a force in history and in the present world."

(*Ibid.*, p. 5.)

" There is a strange unity and solidarity in Islam which justifies such a loose use of the term " World of Islam ".

(Samuel M. Zwemer, *A Factual Survey of the Moslem World*, New York 1946, p. 5.)

"While Christianity in recent years has moved towards a social gospel, Islam has been a social gospel from the start.

"A significant distinction between the two religions is that in the New Testament is a revelation of God; in the Qur'án is a revelation from God . . . Any religion that has lasted fourteen centuries must have something fundamentally significant and meaningful to say to every man — whether he is a millionaire or a pauper, a prince or a slave. And Islam undoubtedly does.

(Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in the Modern World*, London 1946, pp. 22-23.)

"It may be boldly asserted that no people in the world give the impression of being so religious-minded as do Moslems. All of life is saturated with the consciousness of God."

(Charles R. Watson, *What is this Moslem World?*, London 1937, pp. 38-9.)

"The one essential basis of union of Moslems everywhere is the Word of Witness, sometimes called the creed. There is no God but Allah, and Mohammad is the apostle of Allah."

(J. Christy Wilson, *Introducing Islam*, New York 1950, p. 20.)

"More pure than the system of Zoroaster, more liberal than the law of Moses, the religion of Mahomet might seem less inconsistent with reason than the creed of mystery and superstition which, in the seventh century disgraced the simplicity of the gospels."

(Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, London 1838 and 1939, Vol. V., p. 487.)

"The success of Islam was due not only to the 'Holy Wars' but also to its appeal as a religion which satisfied the instinct in man to worship the Supreme Being."

(*Ibid.*, p. 28.)

"Islam created a spiritual brotherhood of Muslims which overcomes all barriers of class, race and colour."

(*Ibid.*, p. 8.)

" His creed is equally suited to the despotism of Russia and to the democracy of the United States . . . It necessarily connotes the existence of a universal empire."

(Ibid., p. 37.)

" In Muhammad's day there was no Arabic version of the Bible from which he could obtain accurate knowledge of Christ . . . Therefore some maintain that the very existence of Islam is due to the failure of the Church."

(Angus Nicolson, Ph.D., *A Guide to Islam,* Stirling 1951, p. 16)

" It requires, therefore, but little knowledge of universal history to perceive that the origin and development of Islam must be of unusual significance, and that a movement productive of such gigantic results must be more than accidental, particularly if we consider that it spread even more rapidly than Christianity."

(Hartwig Hirschfeld, Ph.D., M.R.A.S, *New Researches into the Composition and Exegesis of the Qur'án,* London 1902, p 2.)

" Two features in the Creed of Islam have always specially attracted me. One is the God conception, the other is its unquestionable sincerity — a tremendous asset in human affairs, the religious aspect of them especially. After all, sincerity is almost divine and like love covers a multitude of sins."

(Major Arthur Glyn Leonard, *Islam — Her Moral and Spiritual Value,* London 1927.)

" There can be no question but that, with its pure monotheism, and a code founded in the main on justice and humanity, Islam succeeds in raising to a higher level races sunk in idolatry and fetishism, like those of Central Africa, and that in some respects, notably in that of temperance, it materially improves the morality of such peoples."

(Sir William Muir, *Mahomet and Islam,* London 1895. p. 246.)

" Islam indeed is not only a living and vigorous faith : it is a civilization in the same sense as Christianity is a fundamental part of European and American civilization."

(J. H. Ollman, *Islam,* London 1954, p. 5.)

" In many respects it must be admitted that Mahomet wrought a vast and abiding reform . . . The rigid formulary of ablution, prayer and fasting . . . provides a discipline which it is not easy to replace even under a more exalted system of morals and theology."

(Joseph J. Nunan, *Islam and European Civilization,* Demerara 1912, pp. 34-5.)

" The nobility and broad tolerance of this creed, which accepts as God-inspired all the real religions of the world, will always be a glorious heritage for mankind. On it could indeed be built a perfect world religion."

(Duncan Greenlees, M.A.(Oxon.), *The Gospel of Islam,* Adyar 1948, p. 27.)

" Sense of justice is one of the most wonderful ideals of Islam, because, as I read in the Qur'án, I find those dynamic principles of life, not mystic, but practical ethics for the daily conduct of life suited to the whole world."

(Sarojini Naidu, Lecture on " The Ideals of Islam ", *vide Speeches and Writings of Sarojini Naidu,* Madras 1918, p. 167.)

" It was the first religion that preached and practised democracy ; for, in the mosque when the call from the Minaret is sounded and the worshippers are gathered together, the democracy of Islam is embodied five times a day when the peasant and the king kneel side by side and proclaim, ' God alone is great '. I have been struck over and over again by this indivisible unity of Islam that makes a man distinctively a brother. When you meet an Egyptian, an Algerian, an Indian and a Turk in London, what matters that Egypt was the Motherland of one and India the Motherland of another."

(*Ibid.,* p. 169.)

"The Rev. Canon Isaac Taylor said that over a large portion of the world Islamism as a missionary religion is more successful than Christianity. (Sensation.) Not only are the Moslem converts from paganism more numerous than the Christian converts, but Christianity in some regions is actually receding before Islam, while attempts to proselytize the Mohametan nations are notoriously unsuccessful. . . . Islam has done more for civilization than Christianity. . . . Islam, above all, is the most powerful total abstinence association in the world, whereas the extension of European trade means the extension of drunkenness and vice, and the degradation of people: while Islam induces a civilization of no low order, including a knowledge of reading and writing, decent clothing, personal cleanliness, veracity and self-respect. Its restraining and civilizing effects are marvellous. . . . We ought to begin by recognizing the fact that Islam is not an anti-Christian faith, but a half-Christian faith. . . . Islam is cosmopolitan — not like Judaism, confined to one race, but extended to the whole world. . . . There is nothing in the teaching of Mahomet antagonistic to Christianity. . . . It was a revolt against empty theological polemics; it was a masculine protest against the exaltation of celibacy as a crown of piety. It brought out the fundamental dogma of religion — the unity and greatness of God. It replaced monkliness by manliness. It gave hope to the slave, brotherhood to mankind and recognition of the fundamental facts of human nature. . . .

". . . Mahomet, like Moses, did not prohibit them (polygamy and domestic slavery); that would have been impossible; but he endeavoured to mitigate their evils. Slavery is no part of the creed of Islam. It was tolerated as a necessary evil by Mahomet, as it was by Moses and St. Paul. . . . The strictly regulated polygamy of Moslem lands is infinitely less degrading to women and less injurious to men than the promiscuous polygamy which is the curse of Christian cities, and which is absolutely unknown in Islam."

(The Reverend Canon Isaac Taylor, LL.D.: Lecture on "Mahomedanism" at the Church Congress at Wolverhampton on 7th October 1887 and reported in *The Times*, London, for Saturday 8th October 1887.)

"The secret of success appears to be in the discipline of fasting. Any stranger who has tried to observe the hunger-stricken Ramazan will never accuse Islam of pandering to the appetites of sense."

(David M. Kay, D.S.O., D.D., *The Semitic Religions*, Edinburgh 1923, p. 167.)

" What, then, is the dynamic of this religion which steadfastly refuses to be absorbed by its surroundings, and persistently boasts its superiority to all other systems? While fully recognizing, and giving due credit to, other causes, I believe that the personality of the Prophet, as understood and believed in by his followers, has been a powerful factor in maintaining the Moslem religion."

(Isaac Mason, *The Arabian Prophet,* Shanghai 1921. Preface, p. v.)

" The success of Islam in persuading its adherents to abstain from the use of wine is a notable achievement."

(David M. Kay, D.S.O., D.D., *The Semitic Religions,* Edinburgh 1923, p. 165.)

" The simple creed and the Book have together welded Islam into a singularly homogeneous State, and, although its strength may be the strength of inertia, strength nevertheless it is. Moslems are intensely proud of their world brotherhood. ' Know that every Moslem is the brother of every other Moslem,' said Mohammed near his death, and perhaps the Moslem has been truer to his ideal than the Christian to his. It is the Moslem solidarity that helps to attract the idol-worshipping heathen, and the sense that he will become a member of a new and honourable order of society."

(William Paton, *Jesus Christ and the World's Religions,* London 1925, p. 24.)

" The Moslem missionary today preaches world peace, world brotherhood, temperance, the upliftment of woman, and the breaking down of racial barriers. And there is considerable truth in his claim that, while Christianity *preaches* temperance and the brotherhood of man, Islam really abstains from all forms of alcohol and *practices* racial equality."

(Charles Francis Potter, *The Faiths Men Live By,* Kingswood, Surrey, 1955, p. 85.)

". . . the Qur'án contains no indication, and Islam has never had any institution which could be designated a priesthood."

(D. S. Margoliouth, D.Litt., F.B.A., *Mohammed,* Glasgow 1939, p. 64.)

" Images or pictures, either of Allah or Mohammad, are strictly forbidden, and the mosques with their domes and courtyards, though often beautiful, are bare. One misses the forests of flowers standing before the images of Buddha, the carvings and images of Hindu temples, the priests in their vestments in the churches of Rome, the hymns in a Protestant church. For Moslems these things are looked on as distractions from worship and prayer, and images are held to lead to idolatry.

" Perhaps it was this simplicity of Islam which led to its amazingly rapid spread in its early years."

(Christopher Mayhew, *Men Seeking God,* London 1955, p. 16.)

" As a religion, it (Islam) teaches no new dogmas ; establishes no new revelation, no new precepts ; has no priesthood, and no church government. It gives a code to the people, and a constitution to the State, enforced by the sanction of religion."

(David Urquhart, *The Spirit of the East,* London 1938, Introduction to Vol. I, p. xxvii.)

" Muhammad's original view that earlier religions had been founded by God's will and through divine revelation led both him and his successors to make an important concession : adherents of other faiths were not compelled to adopt Islam. They were allowed to observe their own faith unhindered, if they surrendered without fighting, and were even protected against their enemies, in return for which they had to pay tribute to their Muslim masters ; this was levied as a kind of poll-tax. . . . It would be incorrect for the most part to regard the warrior bands which started from Arabia as inspired by religious enthusiasm or to attribute to them the fanaticism which was first aroused by the Crusades, and in an even greater degree by the later Turkish wars. . . . Anti-Christian fanaticism there was, therefore, none. Even in early years Muhammadans never refused to worship in the same building as Christians. . . . In any case religious animosity was a very subordinate phenomenon. It was a gradual development, and seems to have made a spasmodic beginning in the first century under the influence of ideas adopted from Christianity. It may seem paradoxical to assert that it was Christian influence which first stirred Islam to religious animosity and armed it with the sword against Christianity, but the hypothesis becomes highly probable when we have realized the

indifferentism of the Muhammadan conquerors. . . . The attitude (of the Muslims) towards other beliefs was never so intolerant as was that of Christendom at that period. . . . Moreover, at all times, especially in the first century, the position of Christians has been very tolerable, even though the Muslims regarded them as an inferior class. Christians were able to rise to the highest offices of State, even to the post of Vizier, without compulsion to renounce their faith. Even during the period of the Crusades, when the religious opposition was greatly intensified, again through Christian policy, Christian officials cannot have been uncommon : otherwise Muslim theorists could never have uttered constant invectives against the employment of Christians in administrative duties. Naturally, zealots appeared at all times on the Muhammadan as well as on the Christian side, and occasionally isolated acts of oppression took place : these were, however, exceptional. So late as the eleventh century, Church funeral processions were able to pass through the streets of Baghdad with all the emblems of Christianity, and disturbances were recorded by the chroniclers as exceptional. In Egypt, Christian festivals were also regarded to some extent as holidays by the Muhammadan population. We have but to imagine these conditions reversed in a Christian kingdom of the early Middle Ages. . . .

". . . The Crusades, the Turkish wars, and the great expansion of Europe widened the gulf between Christianity and Islam, while, as the East was gradually brought under ecclesiastical influence, the contrast grew deeper. The theory, however, that the Muhammadan conquerors and their successors were inspired by a fanatical hatred of Christianity is a fiction invented by Christians."

(C. H. Becker, *Christianity and Islam,* London 1909, pp. 28-33.)

"'Take away that black man ! I can have no discussion with him,' exclaimed the Christian Archbishop Cyrus when the Arab conquerors had sent a deputation of their ablest men to discuss terms of surrender of the capital of Egypt, headed by Negro Ubadah as the ablest of them all.

"To the sacred archbishop's astonishment, he was told that this man was commissioned by General Amr ; that the Moslems held Negroes and white men in equal respect — judging a man by his character and not by his colour.

"'Well, if the Negro must lead, he must speak gently,' ordered the prelate, so as not to frighten his white auditors.

"'There are a thousand blacks, as black as myself, amongst our companions. I and they would be ready to meet and fight

a hundred enemies together. We live only to fight for God, and to follow His will. We care naught for wealth, so long as we have the wherewithal to stay our hunger and to clothe our bodies. This world is naught for us, the next world is all.'

"Such a spirit of class distinction is certainly the greatest hindrance to missionary work in the East, as every impartial observer has noted. How, for instance, can any other appeal stand against that of the Moslem who, in approaching the pagan, says to him, however obscure or degraded he may be, 'Embrace the faith, and you are at once an equal and a brother'. Islam knows no 'colour line'."

(S. S. Leeder, *Veiled Mysteries of Egypt*, London 1912, pp. 332-335.)

"Here on the floor of this mosque is a demonstration of the simplicity and the equality which run through the whole Islamic system, in spite of any of its glaring contradictions and exceptions. Close by me is a group of fellaheen, in their blue galabiehs and brown felt skull-caps; near these, a well-to-do young man, in brown silk robe with fez and white turban, probably a native teacher in one of the primary schools; here is a serving-man from one of the neighbouring hotels, in the white and scarlet waistband, with his scarlet leather *babooshes* (shoes) by his side. This is no mosque, by the way, for the tourists and sightseers who leave their shoes with a guardian at the door and paddle about in slippers. We carry our shoes in with us, and place them, sole to sole, beside us — to place mine with the soles on the carpet would have betrayed me.

"A young effendi comes in, in European dress, except, of course, for the tarboosh, with his old-fashioned father, in the black robe and turban. On the other side of me stands a poor labourer, fresh from the ablutions in the fountain court of the mosque, the water still dripping on the carpet from his head, hands and feet, while his wet brown flesh shines in the lamplight. A rich man, whose silk robe is not kind to his portliness, enters with his servants, and they make prayer side by side. Here is a poor old man to whom the attitudes and movements of the prayer have become difficult, but who yet goes through his devotions with intense fervour, and then sits with his hands as a cup upon his breast for a long time, muttering his private devotions; the 'amen' being to stroke the face downwards with the inside of the hands."

(S. H. Leeder, *Veiled Mysteries of Egypt*, London 1912, pp. 116-117.)

"Can a man who has no good qualities hold a friend? Because those who knew Muhammad best believed in him most. Khadija for all her days believed in him -- but she may have been a fond woman. Abu Bekr is a better witness, and he never wavered in his devotion. Abu Bekr believed in the Prophet, and it is very hard for anyone who reads the history of these times not to believe in Abu Bekr. Ali again risked his life for the Prophet in his darkest days. Muhammad was no impostor, at any rate. . . .

"But the personal quality of Muhammad is one thing and the quality of Islam, the religion he founded, is quite another. Muhammad was not pitted against Jesus or Mani, and his relative stature is only a very secondary question for us; it is Islam which was pitted against the corrupted Christianity of the seventh century and against the decaying tradition of the Zoroastrian Magi with which the historian has the greater concern. And whether it was through its Prophet or whether it was in spite of its Prophet, and through certain accidents in its origin and certain qualities of the desert from where it sprang, there can be no denying that Islam possesses many fine and noble attributes. . . .

"A year before his death, at the end of the tenth year of the Hegira, Muhammad made his last pilgrimage from Medina to Mecca. He made then a great sermon to his people of which the tradition is as follows. There are, of course, disputes as to the authenticity of the words, but there can be no dispute that the world of Islam, a world still of three hundred million people, receives them to this day as its rule of life, and to a great extent observes it. The reader will note that the first paragraph sweeps away all plunder and blood feuds among the followers of Islam. The last makes the believing Negro the equal of the Caliph. They may not be sublime words, as certain utterances of Jesus of Nazareth are sublime, but they established in the world a great tradition of dignified fair dealing, they breathe a spirit of generosity, and they are human and workable. They created a society more free from widespread cruelty and social oppression than any society had ever been in the world before."

"'Ye people: Hearken to my words; for I know not whether, after this year, I shall ever be amongst you here again. Your lives and property are sacred and inviolable amongst one another until the end of time.

"'The Lord hath ordained to every man the share of his inheritance; a testament is not lawful to the prejudice of heirs.

"'The child belongeth to the parent; and the violator of wedlock shall be stoned.

"'Whoever claimeth falsely another for his father, or another for his master, the curse of God and the angels and of all mankind shall rest upon him.

"'Ye people! Ye have rights demandable of your wives, and they have rights demandable of you. Upon them it is incumbent not to violate their conjugal faith nor commit any act of open impropriety. . . . And ye have verily taken them on the security of God, and have made their persons lawful unto you by the words of God.

"'And your slaves, see that ye feed them with such food as ye eat yourselves, and clothe them with the stuff ye wear. And if they commit a fault which ye are not inclined to forgive, then sell them, for they are the servants of the Lord, and are not to be tormented.

"'Ye people! hearken to my speech and comprehend the same. Know that every Moslem is the brother of every other Moslem. All of you are on the same equality.'

"The insistence upon kindliness and consideration in the daily life is one of the main virtues of Islam, but it is not the only one. Equally important is the uncompromising monotheism, void of any Jewish exclusiveness, which is sustained by the Koran. Islam from the outset was fairly proof against the theological elaborations that have perplexed and divided Christianity and smothered the spirit of Jesus. And its third source of strength has been in the meticulous prescription of methods of prayer and worship, and its clear statement of the limited and conventional significance of the importance ascribed to Mecca. All sacrifice was barred to the faithful; no loophole was left for the sacrificial priest of the old dispensation to come back into the new faith. It was not simply a new faith, a purely prophetic religion, as the religion of Jesus was in the time of Jesus, or the religion of Gautama in the lifetime of Gautama, but it was so stated as to remain so. Islam to this day has learned doctors, teachers and preachers; but it has no priests.

"It was full of the spirit of kindliness, generosity and brotherhood; it was a simple and understandable religion; it was instinct with the chivalrous sentiment of the desert; and it made its appeal straight to the commonest instincts in the composition of ordinary men. Against it were pitted Judaism, which had made a racial hoard of God; Christianity talking and preaching endlessly now of trinities, doctrines and heresies no ordinary man could make head or tail of; and Mazdaism, the cult of the Zoroastrian Magi, who had inspired the crucifixion of Mani. The bulk of the people to whom the challenge of Islam came did not trouble very much whether Muhammad was lustful or not, or whether he had done

some shifty and questionable things; what appealed to them was that this God, Allah, he preached, was by the test of the conscience in their hearts a God of righteousness, and that the honest acceptance of his doctrine and method opened the door to a world of uncertainty, treachery, and intolerable divisions to a great and increasing brotherhood of trustworthy men on earth, and to a paradise not of perpetual exercises in praise and worship, in which saints, priests and anointed kings were still to have the upper places, but of equal fellowship and simple and understandable delights such as their souls craved for. Without any ambiguous symbolism, without any darkening of altars or chanting of priests, Muhammad had brought home those attractive doctrines to the hearts of mankind."

(H. G. Wells, *The Outline of History*, London, 1920, p. 325.)

"As a religion the Mahomedan religion, it must be confessed, is more suited to Africa than is the Christian religion; indeed, I would even say that it is more suited to the world as a whole. . . .

"It is undeniable that polygamy, or to speak more accurately, the principle underlying it, is not confined to Moslem peoples. To put the matter plainly, who can honestly say that the sexual morality of the West is superior to that of the East? A fair comparison would, I believe, very much favour the latter. Then it is undeniable also that faith in the power of the sword is by no means restricted to the Islamic world. Who can bear more telling witness to the truth of this assertion than Moslems themselves, who have suffered greatly from the sharp swords of the Western nations? Putting aside these two points of resemblance, the achievement of the Moslem faith enjoys, I maintain, a definite superiority, in proof of which may be cited Moslem abstinence, sense of fraternity, condemnation of usury, and recognition of prophets other than its own. Its quality may be summed up by saying that it takes a man as he is, and, while it does not pretend to make a god out of him, it seeks to regulate his conduct so that at least he shall become a good neighbour."

(Lancelot Lawton, *The Sphere*, London, for 12th May 1928.)

"The mission of Muhammad between 622 and 632, arising among the already vigorous and expansive Arabs, who only had to face the weakened and divided Roman and Persian Empires, had a greater promise of success. It still remains an almost incredible achievement for one man. Muhammad swept away the old tribal gods and replaced them by one God, Allah. Islam made a brotherly appeal to all men, it had a simple but exacting personal ritual, a theology reduced to bare monotheism, and it gave a sure hope of a realistic paradise for the believer. All this was conveyed in a poetic book, the Koran, which was not only an inspiration but a manual of rituals, morals and law. It commanded then and still commands the devotion of the poor and rich alike."

(J. D. Bernal, *Science in History*, London 1954, p. 193.)

"No other religion in history spread so rapidly as Islam. . . . The West has widely believed that this surge of religion was made possible by the sword. But no modern scholar accepts that idea, and the Koran is explicit in support of the freedom of conscience. The evidence is strong that Islam welcomed the peoples of many diverse religions, so long as they behaved themselves and paid extra taxes. Muhammad constantly taught that Muslims should co-operate with the 'people of the Book' (Jews and Christians).

"True, there were often wars between Muslims and either Christians or Jews (sometimes because the older religions insisted on battle), and the Koran contains passages of primitive violence relating to these wars. But testimony is overwhelming that 'followers of the Book' were usually given decent treatment, sanctuary and freedom to worship as they wished.

"Many Westerners, accustomed by their history books to believe that Muslims were barbarous infidels, find it difficult to comprehend how profoundly our intellectual life has been influenced by Muslim scholars in the field of science, medicine, mathematics, geography and philosophy. Crusaders who invaded the Holy Land to fight Muslims returned to Europe with new ideas of love, poetry, chivalry, warfare and government. Our concept of what a university should be was deeply modified by Muslim scholars, who perfected the writing of history and who brought to Europe much Greek learning.

"Although Islam originated in Arabia, today only a small percentage (7 per cent) of the world's Muslims are Arabians, and less than a quarter (20 per cent) speak Arabic as their native language.

"More than most religions, Islam preaches the brotherhood of all races, colours and nations within its fold. Muhammad himself

probably had exactly the same skin colouring as Jesus — a very sun-tanned white — but today his followers embrace all colours: black men from Africa, yellow men from China, brown men from Malaya, white men from Turkey.

"Islam permits no priesthood, and because Muhammad had to fight so bitterly against idols, his religion discourages portraiture. Mosques are decorated with geometrical patterns only."

(James A. Michener, "Islam — The Misunderstood Religion," in *The Reader's Digest* (American Edition), for May 1955.

"The extinction of race consciousness as between Muslims is one of the outstanding achievements of Islam, and in the contemporary world there is, as it happens, a crying need for the propagation of this Islamic virtue. . . .

"Though in certain other respects the triumph of the English-speaking peoples may be judged, in retrospect, to have been a blessing to mankind, in this perilous matter of race feeling it can hardly be denied that it has been a misfortune."

(A. J. Toynbee, *Civilization on Trial*, New York 1948, p. 205.)

"In these recently and rapidly 'opened up' tropical territories, the Western civilization has produced an economic and political plenum and, in the same breath, a social and spiritual void."

(*Ibid.*, p. 207.)

"If ever the 'natives' of these regions (Central Africa and Indonesia) succeed in recapturing a spiritual state in which they are able to call their souls their own, it may prove to have been the Islamic spirit that has given fresh form to the void. This spirit may be expected to manifest itself in many practical ways; and one of these manifestations might be a liberation from alcohol, which was inspired by religious conviction and which was therefore able to accomplish what could never be enforced by the external sanction of an alien law.

"Here then in the foreground of the future, we can remark two valuable influences which Islam may exert upon the cosmopolitan proletariat of a Western society that has cast its net round the world and embraced the whole of mankind."

(*Ibid.*, p. 208.)

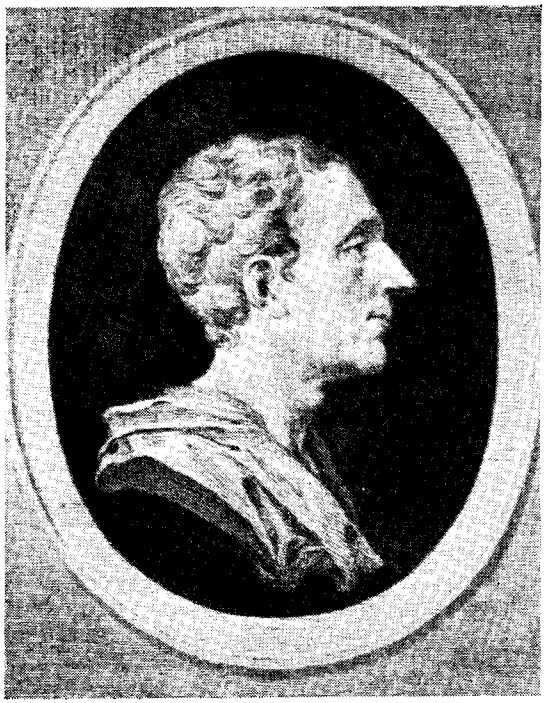
"It is known that through many centuries of history — if we except some thinkers—a fateful misconception of Islam has prevailed in the West. Through more than a millenium Islam was taken to stand beside Christianity as a heresy, partly but not fully acknowledging Christ. The Prophet of Islam was thus regarded as a "cunning author" and a "false prophet". This is not the place to analyse how this misconception had come to prevail among the believers in the Gospel towards the assertors of a later revelation.

"It is to the credit of the Age of Enlightenment, the eighteenth century, to have abandoned this attitude. Its representatives widened their field of research. Simon Ockley, a Cambridge man, wrote his remarkable *History of the Saracens,* which appeared in 1712-18. It was Montesquieu who, in his great work, *Esprit des Lois,* 1748, broadened the traditional scheme of confining world history to that of the Jews, Greeks, Romans and later Christian nations only. He explained how climate, religions and laws mutually contributed to shape the fates and features of nations. Drawing from all the sources available, he compared the conditions of the nations of Europe, of the Islamic world, of India and of China. He had a considerable knowledge of Islamic countries and proclaimed the rules laid down by Islam, ablutions, fast and the prohibition of wine, as 'wise and healthy having regard to the climate'. He remarks on the 'advantages' and 'disadvantages' of some Islamic institutions. He is not dealing with religion as such but with the consequences of religion.

"The great German essayist Lessing, who was in communication with the Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn, turned to the problem of the Three Religions. Hampered by the censor, he gave his new ideas the shape of a drama, *Nathan the Wise,* written in 1799, which he welded around the Oriental legend of the Three Rings: A father left his three sons three rings of perfectly equal make, not mentioning which one was the original. Remembering that he had said that the genuine ring would give its bearer special grace and amiability, they each in their own way tried to live up to this test through their conduct. The three main figures of the play are Nathan, a wise, generous and broad-minded Jewish merchant, King Saladin (Salah ud-Din), that great Muslim statesman of proverbial piety, wit and liberality, and the Templar, a rash, romantic, noble-minded young Crusader. All three come to probe one another's character and mettle through an episode happening in Jersualem. This play, which was regarded as a defence both of religious tolerance and of religious values, was translated into many languages.

"Montesquieu's proposition of giving a synopsis of all civilizations was taken up by Herder, an outstanding scholar of theology,

literatures and languages, a native of the German Baltic provinces of the Czarist Russian Empire, who taught in Strassburg and later in Weimar. He, too, was an untiring collector from all the then available sources. But his original problem was not, as in



The French sociologist of the eighteenth century, Montesquieu, who broadened the knowledge of Europe about Islam.

Montesquieu's case, laws and sociology, but language, poetic inspiration, prophetic revelation and the literatures of nations. The nations of 'national literatures' and of 'Universal Literature' *(Weltlitteratur),* and the aiming at a higher education which would comprise the classics of all nations, go back to Herder. He did believe deeply in the Creator. In his main work, *Ideas for a Philosophy of the History of Mankind,* 1784, he sets out a clear history of the creation of the Earth ; then of the gradual evolution

of plant life, animals, and finally of man and of the evolution of mankind on the whole globe — of peoples, languages, literatures and societies.

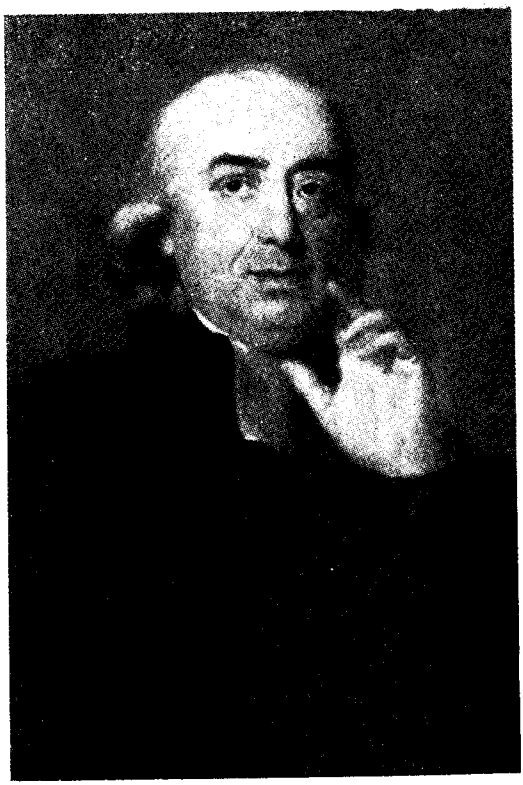
" Approaching the Arabic field through his deep scholarship of Hebrew literature and poetry, Herder achieved a fine knowledge of Arab civilization. He knew the pre-Muslim poems of the Mu'allaqat, which had been published and translated by the English Orientalist, Sir William Jones, in 1783. He describes Muhammad as an accomplished offspring of his tribe and town, of his nation and of its history, and a genius in its magnificent language. He sees in him a visionary poet of a 'glowing imagination' who became the educator of his people and moderator of their violent customs. All this, as well as the events of following centuries and the many achievements of the Arabic civilization, he depicts in a colourful style.

" Herder's pupil was the young Goethe, who listened to this thinker when a student in Strassburg about 1770. Already in his schooldays Goethe had got hold of the Qur'án in the classical translation of Maracci (a scholar in close touch with Pope Innocent XI), of 1698, which was re-edited in Leipzig in 1740. He had translated some passages into German. Under Herder's influence he was led to meditate on the inspiration of the poet and prophet. He was completely undogmatic. His own religious feeling — feeling the nameless One, the One beyond recognition — is echoed in the famous verses of Faust. 'Who can name Him, who can know Him . . .?' In this mood he began to design a play on Muhammad, of which fragments remain. His hero is for him first the lonely seeker, then the inspired prophet. He first experienced nature, the hills and thunder-clouds, the desert and skies, the firmament of the night with its hosts of stars, the moon with its phases and the sun upon which all life depends. He invokes the morning star; the moon; the sun — each time in vain. From this experience of nature he comes to recognize the Creator Himself. 'Arise, my loving heart, to the Creating One! Be my Lord, Thou, my God! Thou, All-Loving, Thou, who didst create the sun, the moon and stars, earth, and heaven and me!'

Hebe, liebendes Herz, dem Erschaffender, dich!
Sei mein Herr du, mein Gott! Du Alliebender, du,
Der die Sonne, den Mond und die Stern'
Schuf, Erde und Himmel und mich!
(Mahomets Nachthymne, 1771.)

This beautiful poem, of which the last strophe is a monologue of Muhammad, is one of the fragments of the unfinished play of the twenty-four year old poet, in whose heart certain famous verses of the Qur'án seem to have resounded. For the first time in Western

literature it was Goethe who represented Muhammad without reserve as a prophet — a true prophet of God.



The German scholar Herder, of the eighteenth century, a scholar of Arab civilization.

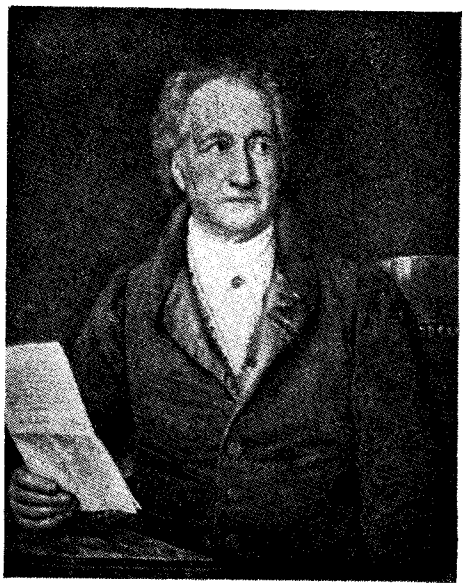
" Many decades later, after a full human life, a Minister of State, and a figure of European stature, Goethe, in his sixties, again turned to Oriental studies. Now the Persian poets and Sufi mysteries attracted him. Sa'di's famous *Rose Garden,* a compendium of the experiences, anecdotes and wisdom of the traveller-poet, had appeared with a Latin version, re-edited after the first edition of Amsterdam, 1651, in Jena in 1777. The publisher, Eichborn, presented a copy to Goethe, and this volume became his treasured companion ever after. In the same year an *Anthologia Persica*

appeared under the auspices of the Vienna Oriental Academy. But what impressed the poet most was Hammer's elaborate German verse-translation of the poems of Hafiz. These two elegant small leather volumes were published at Cotta's, Stuttgart, in 1813. Baron Joseph v. Hammer had begun his translation with the help of various commentaries when he was a young Austrian diplomat in Constantinople in 1799, and he finally brought it to a conclusion when again in Istanbul in 1806. In his introduction he stresses that Hafiz of Shiraz (about 1300-1389) was essentially a religious teacher, called by his contemporaries the 'mystic tongue' and 'interpreter of divine secrets', and that his love poems were only a side issue, collected after his death. He mentions the old controversy as to whether his poems were expressions of earthly love, or were divine allegories. Goethe took the issue up in his lovely verse *'Sie haben dich, heiliger Hafis, die mystiche Zunge gennant'* in which he says that Hafiz was a mystic and saint, not in spite of having written those astounding love poems, but indeed just because he was that great poet and wizard of words and that great and true lover. Though not one of the 'pious', yet he was blessed.

"Goethe devoted himself to these Oriental studies mainly during the later Napoleonic wars which swept from the Seine to Moscow and back and disturbed the repose of the small principality of Weimar. The fruits he collected in the *West Eastern Divan,* published in 1819, which comprised a garland of verses in a more or less Oriental style, some being deep interpretations of Eastern thought, others profound love poems, others little incidental rhymes clad in 'Oriental' robes; the whole being followed by a set of scholarly essays. In these remarkable prose essays, *Noten* and *Abhandlungen,* Goethe gives the backgrounds to Oriental poetry, Hebrew, Arabic and Persian. This enlightening little work is enriched by many new findings, the fruits of Goethe's own research. The chapter on Muhammad gives the fundamentals of Islam and a character-sketch of the Prophet. There follows the period of the Caliphs. Then monographs of the seven classical poets of Persia, Firdusi, Anwari, Nizami, Jalal al-Din Rumi, Sa'di, Hafiz and Jami. Also monographs of Western travellers who brought knowledge of the Orient to the West, from Marco Polo and della Valle, Olearius, German translator of Sa'di (1654), and the French Protestant travellers Tavernier and Chardin to his contemporaries, the British in India, men like Sir William Jones, who, as Goethe stresses, shed light on Muslim as well as on Sanscrit literature, and to Baron von Hammer.

"His Oriental studies between 1812 and 1817 Goethe considered as an 'escape' from war-ridden Europe to a more peaceful East, where the poet saw a wise religion, a contented civilization, and elements of the patriarchal age. This escape he calls, in the title

of the first poem, his *Hejira*. He says, 'When North and West and South splinter, thrones burst and empires tremble, flee to the pure



The immortal German poet and thinker Johann Goethe, whose words of tribute to the thought of Islam, "If this be Islam, do we not all live in Islam?" have become immortal.

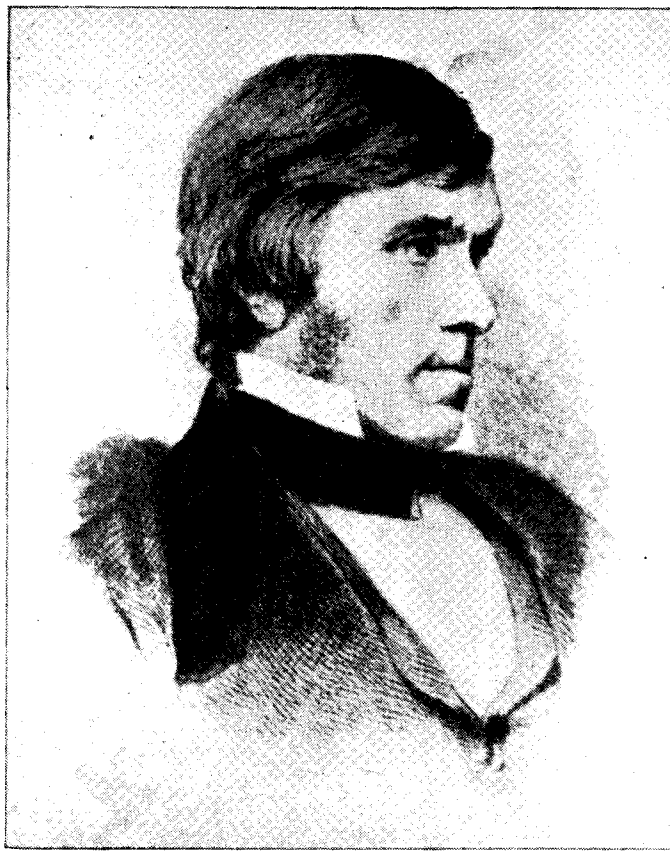
East and breathe the air of the patriarchs.'

"There follows what is the motto of the *Divan*:

Gottes ist der Orient.
Gottes ist der Occident.
Nord' und suedliches Gelaende
Ruht im Frieden seiner Haende.

"('God's is the Orient. God's is the Occident. The North and the South, all rest in the Peace of His hands'), which is a free rendering in accomplished verse of Sura II, 115, of the Qur'án. Then another Qur'ánic verse: 'He, the only Just One, for every man desires the right. Of His hundred names, be this one highly praised. Amen.'

"To assess Herder's and Goethe's work for a re-appreciation of Islam, both, drawing from the primary as well as from many later and modern sources, and thinking widely and deeply, have established a truth which had been lost in the West, namely, that the



The famous English essayist, Thomas Carlyle, whose tribute to Muhammad and Islam in Heroes and Hero-worship *removed many a misconception about Islam.*

Orient is an integral part of our common tradition and civilization. And they realized that the famous nations of the Orient have

largely been shaped, and carried towards maturity, through the influence of Islam.

"We might note that Johannes von Muller, famous Swiss historian and European statesman, published in 1806 a short collection translated from the Turkish of verses of the Qur'án on Holy War. He tells in the introduction how he was stirred by contemporary issues, the enthusiastic armies of the French Revolution and their victories, their secular creed, problems of defence and the need for a God-fearing public spirit. He compares his own period with the rise of Islam, the expansion and the later ebbing of events: 'Speedily,' he says, 'as in our times the fibre caught, but unchangeable, immutable, fast as Sinai's granite, remained the *Word* — not written on sheets of paper, but in the depths of human nature.'

"There is a connection between Goethe and the young Thomas Carlyle. The volcanic Scotsman became an inspired, re-inspiring pupil of the grand old man of Weimar, corresponding with him from 1820 down to Goethe's death in 1832. Carlyle's mind revolted against the utilitarian 'morality' and economy of Jeremy Bentham, this 'beggarly and false view of man and the universe'. He groped back to the deep, true sources of life. He meditated on the hero — the prophet, the poet, the king, men who with Moses's staff struck the rock and made spring the living water and who led their people. He first envisaged Muhammad; Dante, Shakespeare, Luther and others followed.

"The second of his lectures on *Heroes and Hero-worship*, in 1840, is devoted to Muhammad and Islam. He refuted silly and vile misrepresentations 'that are disgraceful to ourselves'. His style rises to the heights of his strong colourful diction and moral passion. There is also the human touch of the biographer, for instance when he tells how Khadidja, good wife and friend of her husband, first wondered and shook her head, then calmed and encouraged him — and at last fully understood when Muhammad, spiritually and physically shaken by his Divine experience, returned home from the cave of Mount Hira. Even today the reader will be moved and will get an unforgettable picture of the Prophet and those fine men and women around him, of Muhammad the man, straight-minded, humble, sincere, also he will get some idea of the message of Islam:

"'A silent great soul, one of those who cannot but be earnest. 'He was to kindle the world, the world's Maker had ordered it so. The routine of Arab idolatry was nought. The arguments of the Grecian seers were distant. By the favour of Heaven he found: 'There is One God in and over all. God is greatest—and nothing else is great. He is the Reality. . . . We and all things are but the shadow of Him. A transitory garment veiling the Eternal Splendour. . . . We must submit to God. This is Islam. . . .'

"Carlyle quotes here the words of Goethe: 'We resign ourselves to God. If this be Islam, do we not all live in Islam?"

"Our survey has shown that it was the School of Enlightenment and even more the following Romantic School originating from Herder (who called upon intuition besides learning to unveil the roots of history, the depths of personality, the genius of language and the essentials of religion) that discovered Islam for the West. Shedding light on all the great civilizations of the Orient and of Asia, these thinkers have re-ascertained the unity of mankind and have taught us to see East and West in one. This modern scholarship at its best has given, in the cosmos of living religion, its due place to Islam. We in the West, now better than the more limited generations of the past, may realize the abundance of God's gifts to His nations."

(Dr. Ruth S. Gaevernitz, "Some Western Appreciations of Islam in the 18th and 19th Centuries," *The Islamic Review*, Woking, England, for March 1949

"And they shall not bring to you any argument, but we have brought to you (one) with truth and best in significance" (The Qur'án, 25 : 33).

"I am Allah the Seeing. (This is) a Book which we have revealed to you that you may bring forth men, by their Lord's permission, from darkness into light, to the way of the Mighty, the Praised One" (The Qur'án, 14 : 1).

"The truth is, I do not find any understanding author who controverts the elegancy of the Alcoran, it being generally esteemed as the standard of the Arabic language and eloquence."

(Dr. Henry Stubbe, M.A., *Rise and Progress of Mahometanism*, London 1911, p. 158.)

"So there has been no opportunity for any forgery or pious fraud in the Koran, which distinguishes it from almost all other important religious works of ancient times. . . . It is exceedingly strange that this illiterate person should have composed the best book in the language."

(Basanta Coomar Bose, *Mahomedanism*, Calcutta 1931, p. 4.)

"It is more read than any other book in the world. The Christian Bible may be a world best-seller, but nearly 250 million followers of the Prophet Mohammed read or recite long sections

of Alcoran *five times a day*, every day of their lives, from the time they can talk."

(Charles Francis Potter, *The Faiths Men Live By*, Kingswood, Surrey, 1955, p. 81.)

"The Koran abounds in excellent moral suggestions and precepts; its composition is so fragmentary that we cannot turn to a single page without finding maxims of which all men must approve. This fragmentary construction yields texts, and mottoes, and rules complete in themselves, suitable for common men in any of the incidents of life."

(John William Draper, *A History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*, London 1875, Vol. I, pp. 343-344.

"Allah is known as the 'Lord of the Worlds' or 'Ruler of the Universe' and as the 'Lord of the Day of Judgment'. These phrases are repeated in the stated prayers of Moslems and are found in the first sura of the Koran, with which a Christian or a Jew could almost entirely agree. As a matter of fact, this sura may be compared to one of the first psalms."

(J. Christy Wilson, *Introducing Islam*, New York 1950, p. 20.)

"Women are excluded, it is sometimes ignorantly affirmed, from the Mohammedan Paradise. The Koran says, 'Enter into Paradise ye and your wives' (43 : 70), and we are told that 'whoso hath done the things that are right — whether male or female — shall enter Paradise' (40 : 43 ; 4 : 123)."

(J. Shillidy, D.D., *The Lord Jesus in the Koran*, Surat 1913, p. 109.)

"The Koran is the Mohammedan Bible, and is more reverenced than any other sacred book, more than the Jewish Old Testament or the Christian New Testament."

(*Ibid.*, p. 111.)

"From the literary point of view, the Koran is regarded as a specimen of the purest Arabic, written in half poetry and half prose. It has been said that in some cases grammarians have adopted their

rules to agree with certain phrases and expressions used in it, and that, though several attempts have been made to produce a work equal to it as far as elegant writing is concerned, none has as yet succeeded.

"It will thus be seen, from the above, that a final and complete text of the Koran was prepared within twenty years after the death (A.D. 632) of Muhammad, and that this has remained the same, without any change, or alteration by enthusiasts, translators, or interpolators, up to the present time. It is to be regretted that the same cannot be said of all the books of the Old and New Testaments."

(F. F. Arbuthnot, *The Construction of the Bible and the Koran,* London 1885, p. 5.)

"We must not be surprised to find the Qoran the fountain-head of the sciences. Every subject connected with heaven or earth, human life, commerce and various trades is occasionally touched upon, and this gave rise to the production of numerous monographs forming commentaries on parts of the holy book. In this way the Qoran was responsible for great discussions, and to it was indirectly due the marvellous development of all branches of science in the Muslim world. . . . This again not only affected the Arabs but also induced Jewish philosophers to treat metaphysical and religious questions after Arab methods. Finally, the way in which Christian scholasticism was fertilised by Arabian theosophy need not be further discussed.

"Spiritual activity once aroused within Islamic bounds was not confined to theological speculations alone. Acquaintance with the philosophical, mathematical, astronomical and medical writings of the Greeks led to the pursuance of these studies. In the descriptive revelations Muhammad repeatedly calls attention to the movement of the heavenly bodies, as parts of the miracles of Allah forced into the service of man and therefore *not* to be worshipped. How successfully Moslem people of all races pursued the study of astronomy is shown by the fact that for centuries they were its principal supporters. Even now many Arabic names of stars and technical terms are in use. Medieval astronomers in Europe were pupils of the Arabs. . . .

"In the same manner the Qoran gave an impetus to medical studies and recommended the contemplation and study of Nature in general."

(Hartwig Hirschfeld, Ph.D., M.R.A.S., *New Researches into the Composition and Exegesis of the Quran,* London 1902, p. 9.)

"The Koran admittedly occupies an important position among the great religious books of the world. Though the youngest of the epoch-making works belonging to this class of literature, it yields to hardly any in the wonderful effect which it has produced on large masses of men. It has created an all but new phase of human thought and a fresh type of character."

(Rev. G. Margoliouth, in Introduction to *The Koran*, by Rev. J. M. Rodwell, London 1918.)

"It must be acknowledged, too, that the Koran deserves the highest praise for its conceptions of the Divine nature, in reference to the attributes of Power, Knowledge, and universal Providence and Unity — that its belief and trust in the One God of Heaven and Earth is deep and fervent—and that . . . it embodies much of a noble and deep moral earnestness, and sententious oracular wisdom, and has proved that there are elements in it on which mighty nations and conquering . . . empires can be built up."

(Rev. J. M. Rodwell, M.A., *The Koran*, London 1918, p. 15.)

"Much of the Koran is in a sort of rhymed cadence that resembles poetry but may still be termed prose. From the point of view of literature, it is considered supreme in Arabic and has no doubt influenced the language to an even greater extent than the King James version of the Bible has influenced English. Being thus the absolute model for literary style and diction, as well as the authoritative pronouncement of Allah, it is considered the one great miracle of Mohammed; in fact he repeatedly challenged his adversaries to produce anything like it."

"Next to the Bible it (Quran) is the most esteemed and most powerful religious book in the world."

(J. Christy Wilson, *Introducing Islam*, New York 1950, p. 30.)

" Well then, if the Koran were his own composition other men could rival it. Let them produce ten verses like it. If they could not (and it is obvious that they could not), then let them accept the Koran as an outstanding evidential miracle."

(H. A. R. Gibb, *Mohammedanism,* London 1953, p. 33.)

" It (Quran) is a literal revelation of God, dictated to Muhammad by Gabriel, perfect in every letter. It is an ever-present miracle witnessing to itself and to Muhammad, the Prophet of God. Its miraculous quality resides partly in its style, so perfect and lofty that neither men nor *jinn* could produce a single chapter to compare with its briefest chapter, and partly in its content of teachings, prophecies about the future, and amazingly accurate information such as the illiterate Muhammad could never have gathered of his own accord."

(Harry Gaylord Dorman, *Towards Understanding Islam,* New York 1948, p. 3.)

" Whenever Muhammad was asked a miracle, as a proof of the authenticity of his mission, he quoted the composition of the Quran and its incomparable excellence as proof of its Divine origin. And, in fact, even for those who are non-Muslims nothing is more marvellous than its language which with such a prehensible plenitude and a grasping sonority with its simple audition ravished with admiration those primitive peoples so fond of eloquence The ampleness of its syllables with a grandiose cadence and with a remarkable rhythm have been of much moment in the conversion of the most hostile and the most sceptic."

(Paul Casanova, " L'Enseignement de l'Arabe au Collège de France, in *Leçon d'overture* for 26th April 1909.)

" On the whole we find in it a collection of wisdom which can be adopted by the most intelligent of men, the greatest of philosophers and the most skilful of politicians. . . . But there is another proof of the Divinity of the Quran ; it is the fact that it has been preserved intact through the ages since the time of its Revelation till the present day. . . . Read and reread by the Muslim world, this book does not rouse in the faithful any weariness ; it rather, through repetition, is more loved every day. It gives rise to a profound feeling of awe and respect in the one who reads it or listens to it. . . . It was, therefore, neither by means of violence of arms, nor through the pressure of obtrusive missionaries, that caused the great and rapid diffusion of Islam, but, above all, through the fact that this Book, presented by the Muslims to the vanquished with the liberty to accept it or reject it, was the Book of God, the Word of Truth, the greatest Miracle Muhammad could show to those in doubt and to those who remained stubborn."

(Laura Veccia Vaglieri, *Apologie de l'Islamisme,* pp. 57-59.)

" The Coran is the groundwork of Islam. Its authority is absolute in all matters of religion, ethics and science, equally as in matters of religion . . . the Coran is supreme and much of the tendency is so plain as to admit no question, even among contending sectaries."

(Sir William Muir, *The Life of Mahomet,* London 1903, Ch. : The Coran, p. VII.)

" One of the most deplorable things in history," said Dr. J. W. Draper, the author of *The Intellectual Development of Europe,* " is the systematic way in which European writers have contrived to put out of sight the scientific obligations to the Arabs."

H. G. FARMER in his *Historical Facts in the Arabian Musical Influence.*

" All those who are acquainted with the Quran in Arabic agree in praising the beauty of this religious book ; its grandeur of form is so sublime that no translation into any European language can allow us to appreciate it."

(Edward Montet, *Traduction Française du Coran,* Paris 1929, Introduction, p. 53.)

" The Koran is universally allowed to be written with the utmost elegance and purity of language, in the dialect of Koreish, the most noble and polite of all Arabians, but with some mixture, though very rarely of other dialects. It is confessedly the standard of the Arabic tongue. . . .

" The style of the Koran is generally beautiful and fluent, especially where it imitates the prophetic manner and scripture phrases. . . .

" It is probable the harmony of expression which the Arabians find in the Koran might contribute not a little to make them relish the doctrine therein taught."

(George Sale, *The Koran ;* The Preliminary Discourse, London and New York 1891, pp. 47-48.)

" A judgment not upon the Koran itself, but upon the inadequate renderings which have been widely canvassed as faithful translations."

(A. J. Arberry, *The Holy Koran,* an introduction with selections, London 1953, p. 17.)

" Bad translation is not the whole story by any means. In fact the Koran has not been unlucky in its English translators : Sale and Palmer were talented writers. . . . No, the fault lies not so much in the manner of translation as in the manner of reading the translations. The root of the trouble is that the ordinary reader, and for that matter the extraordinary reader as well, has not been sufficiently advised how to read the Koran.

" In the first place, the Western reader must get rid of the assumption that the Koran is more or less like the Old Testament. The misapprehension is natural enough, when the first casual glance picks out the names of Adam, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Jonah, Joseph, Job ; the Biblical style of the popular translations does not furnish exactly a corrective. Misled by these early impressions, the reader makes the fatal mistake of trying to take it too

much at once ; he opens at a likely place, the beginning of a *sura*, and is lulled into suspicion by the familiar layout of chapter and verse ; he finishes his first *sura* and goes on to several more ; he is bewildered by the rapid and seemingly illogical changes of subject, and he quickly wearies of the frequent repetitions of themes and formulas, he misses the homely straightforwardness of *Kings* or *Samuel*, the sustained eloquence of the *Psalms* or *Isaiah*. Having no clue to the Koran's own excellencies he compares it unfavourably with what he has known since childhood, and is now ready to concur with Carlyle.

" The Koran, like the poetry which it resembles in so many ways, is best sampled a little at a time ; and that little deserves and needs meditation. . . . He (the reader) will become gradually familiar with the Koran's claim to be a confirmation of earlier scriptures. He will observe how the Koran assumes a knowledge of the contents of those scriptures, and only later expands the individual narratives into something like connected stories. He now follows step by step the gradual unfolding of the full prophetic powers ; and when he comes to the polemic and the legislation he is readier to receive and understand them.

" He, the uninitiated enquirer, however strenuous and sincere his purpose, will always be denied participation in the believer's joy because he is screened from it by the double veil of a printed page and a foreign idiom. Yes, a foreign idiom, for the Koran is God's revelation in Arabic, and the emotive and evocative qualities of the original disappear almost totally in the skilfullest translation.

" When appreciation rests upon these foundations, the charges of wearisome repetition and jumbled confusion become meaningless. Truth cannot be dimmed by being frequently stated, but only gains in clarity and convincingness at every repetition ; and where all is true, inconsequence and incomprehensibility are not felt to arise."

(*Ibid.*, pp. 25-27.)

" The Koran is probably the most often read book in the world, surely the most often memorised, and possibly the most influential in the daily life of the people who believe in it. Not quite so long as the New Testament, written in an exalted style, it is neither poetry nor ordinary prose, yet it possesses the ability to arouse its hearers to ecstasies of faith.

" The Koran was revealed to Muhammad between the years 610 and 632 in the cities of Mecca and Medina. Devoted scribes wrote it down on ' scraps of paper, bark and the white shoulder blades of animals '. The early revelations were dazzling assurances

that there was only one God, Merciful and Compassionate : ' He is Allah, the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner. Whatever is in the heavens and the earth declares His glory ; and He is the Mighty, the Wise '.

" It was this message that swept away idols, and inspired men to revolutionise their lives and their nations. In later years, when Islam began to penetrate large areas of Arabia and had acquired much power, the revelation dealt with the organisation of society, its laws, procedures and problems.

" Many revered names from Christianity and Judaism appear in the Koran. For example, five important chapters are titled Noah, Jonah, Joseph, Abraham and Mary. Lacking specific chapters of their own, but playing quite important roles, are Jesus, Adam, David, Goliath, Job, Moses, Lot and Solomon.

" The Koran is remarkably down-to-earth in its discussion of the good life. In one memorable passage it directs : ' When ye deal with each other in transactions involving future obligations, reduce them to writing . . . and get two witnesses, so that if one of them errs the other can remind him. This is juster in the sight of God, more suitable as evidence, and more convenient to prevent doubts among yourselves.

" It is this combination of dedication to one God, plus practical instruction, that makes the Koran unique. Each Islamic nation contains many citizens who are convinced that their land will be governed well only if its laws conform to the Koran."

(James A. Michener, " Islam — the Misunderstood Religion," in *The Reader's Digest* (American edition) for May 1955.)

" Verily, we have not sent you but as a mercy to (all) the nations " (The Qur'án, 21 : 107).

" His denunciation of idolatry, and his preaching of the one God and of the equality of man before God, must ever distinguish him honourably as a great religious teacher."

(G. T. Bettany, M.A., B.Sc., *Mohammedanism,* London 1892, p. 95.)

" In little more than a year he was actually the spiritual, nominal and temporal ruler of Medina, with his hand on the lever that was to shake the world."

(John Austin, " Muhammad the Prophet of Allah," in *T.P.'s and Cassel's Weekly* for 24th September 1927.)

" Serious or trivial, his daily behaviour has instituted a canon which millions observe at this day with conscious memory. No one regarded by any section of the human race as Perfect Man has been imitated so minutely. The conduct of the Founder of Christianity has not so governed the ordinary life of his followers. Moreover, no founder of a religion has been left on so solitary an eminence as the Muslim Apostle."

(D. G. Hogarth, *A History of Arabia,* Oxford 1922, p. 52.)

" It is not the propagation but the permanency of his religion that deserves our wonder; the same pure and perfect impression which he engraved at Mecca and Medina is preserved, after the revolutions of twelve centuries, by the Indian, the African and the Turkish proselytes of the Koran. . . . The Mahometans have uniformly withstood the temptation of reducing the object of their faith and devotion to a level with the senses and imagination of man. 'I believe in one God, and Mahomet, the Apostle of God,' is the simple and invariable profession of Islam. The intellectual image of the Deity has never been degraded by any visible idol: the honours of the prophet have never transgressed the measure of human virtue: and his living precepts have restrained the gratitude of his disciples within the bounds of reason and religion."

(Edward Gibbon and Simon Ockley, *History of the Saracen Empire,* London 1870, p. 54.)

" Mohammed succeeded in fastening upon his people, and extending throughout the Middle East, 'a broader, cleaner, fresher, more vigorous political and social ideal than that of the decadent Byzantine Empire'. . . . Mohammed expressly rejected all claims to work miracles, and he despised grandeur, and lived on principle an extremely frugal life, though he was no ascetic. . . . He is reputed to have behaved very simply, and there is no reason for not supposing that he did. He performed the most menial tasks with his own hands, and was essentially puritan, saying that Divine revelation forbade him to wear either gold or silk."

(A. C. Bouquet, *Comparative Religion,* Penguin Books Ltd., Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1954, pp. 269-270.)

" His belief in force has encouraged comparison with some of the dictators of later times, who have also been single-hearted and personally abstemious. But the answer to this is that such men tend

to fall, whereas Muhammad founded a religion which has guided millions of men of many nationalities for thirteen hundred years and which is still on the increase. Mere power-seeking fanatics are unable to influence later generations no longer subject to their personal magnetism. After the death of Muhammad there was one of the most remarkable outbursts of conquests the world has ever seen."

(Selwyn Gurney, M.D., and Dorothy Short, *Readings from World Religions,* London 1951, p. 254.)

"On the whole the wonder to me is not how much, but how little, under different circumstances, Mohammed differed from himself. In the shepherd of the desert, in the Syrian trader, in the solitude of Mount Hira, in the reformer in the minority of one, in the exile of Medina, in the acknowledged conqueror, in the equal of the Persian Chosroes and the Greek Heraclius, we can still trace a substantial unity. I doubt whether any other man, whose external conditions changed so much, ever himself changed less to meet them: the accidents are changed, the essence seems to me to be the same in all."

(R. Bosworth Smith, M.A., *Mohammed and Mohammedanism,* London 1874, p. 93.)

"Muhammad himself did not make any claim to infallibility. On one occasion he had a revelation censuring himself severely for having turned away from a beggar in order to speak to an illustrious man of the commonwealth, and he published this revelation, the very last thing which he would have done had he been an impostor, as ignorant Christians call the great Arab prophet."

(G. W. Leitner, LL.D., M.A., Ph.D., D.O.L., *Mohammadanism,* Lahore 1893, p. 4.)

"In spite of all this, Muhammad is a most interesting personage, and probably the most suitable man his country could have produced for this great monotheistic reaction against a decaying paganism. This is the main reason why we study the work of his life. We can do him more justice, if we measure him according to the moral standard of his age and country."

(Hartwig Hirschfeld, Ph.D., M.R.A.S., *New Researches into the Composition and Exegesis of the Quran,* London 1902, Preface (i).)

" Mahomet himself, after all that can be said about him, was not a sensual man. We shall err widely if we consider this man as a common voluptuary, intent mainly on base enjoyments, nay, on enjoyments of any kind. His household was of the frugalest; his common diet barley-bread and water; sometimes for months there was not a fire once lighted on his hearth. They record with just pride that he would mend his own shoes, patch his own cloak. A poor, hard-toiling, ill-provided man; careless of what vulgar men toil for. Not a bad man, I should say; something better in him than *hunger* of any sort, or these wild Arab men, fighting and jostling three-and-twenty years at his hand, in close contact with him always, would not have reverenced him so! They were wild men, bursting ever and anon with quarrel, with all kinds of fierce sincerity; without right worth and manhood, no man could have commanded them. . . . No emperor with his tiaras was obeyed as this man in a cloak of his own clouting. During three-and-twenty years of rough actual trial, I find something of a veritable hero necessary for that myself."

(Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History,* London 1888, p. 61.)

" Four years after the death of Justinian, A.D. 569, was born at Mecca, in Arabia, the man who, of all men, has exercised the greatest influence upon the human race . . . Mohammed. . . ."

(John William Draper, M.D., LL.D., *A History of the Intellectual Development of Europe,* London 1875, Vol. I, pp. 329-330.)

" Muhammad was the soul of kindness, and his influence was felt and never forgotten by those around him."

(Diwan Chand Sharma, *The Prophets of the East,* Calcutta 1935, p. 122.)

" It is strongly corroborative of Mohammed's sincerity that the earliest converts to Islam were his bosom friends and the people of his household, who, all intimately acquainted with his private life, could not fail to have detected those discrepancies which more or less invariably exist between the pretentions of the hypocritical deceiver and his actions at home."

(John Davenport, *An Apology for Mohammed and the Koran,* London 1869, p. 17.)

"Mohammed possessed that combination of qualities which more than once has decided the fate of empires. . . . Asserting that everlasting truth, he did not engage in vain metaphysics, but applied himself to improving the social condition of his people by regulations respecting personal cleanliness, sobriety, fasting and prayer. Above all other works, he esteemed alms-giving and charity. With a liberality to which the world had of late become a stranger, he admitted the salvation of men of any form of faith provided they were virtuous. To the declaration that there is but one God, he added, 'And Mohammed is His prophet'. Whoever desires to know whether the event of things answered to the boldness of such an announcement will do well to examine a map of the world in our own times. He will find the marks of something more than an imposture. To be the religious head of many empires, to guide the daily life of one-third of the human race, may perhaps justify the title of Messenger of God."

(*Ibid.*, pp. 329-330.)

"To thoroughly comprehend the spirit of Mohammed or the soul of Islam, the student himself . . . must at the outset recognize that Mohammed was no mere spiritual pedlar, no vulgar time-serving vagrant, but one of the most profoundly sincere and earnest spirits of any age or epoch. A man not only great, but one of the greatest (i.e., truest), men that humanity has ever produced. Great, not simply as a prophet, but as a patriot and a statesman: a material as well as a spiritual builder who constructed a great nation, a greater empire, and more even than all three, a still greater Faith, true, moreover, because he was true to himself, his people, and above all to his God. Recognizing this, he will thus acknowledge that Islam is a profound and true cult, which strives to uplift its votaries from the depths of human darkness upwards into the higher realm of Light and Truth."

(Major Arthur Glyn Leonard, *Islam — Her Moral and Spiritual Value*, London 1927, pp. 20-21.)

"Muhammad's unique position in religious history is due to the fact that he inspired all he did without being a saint or an angel, without having any attributes which were not strictly human. Outside his tremendous personality he had nothing in life to distinguish him from other Moslems."

(*Ibid.*, p. 338.)

" That he believed himself to be the Messenger of Allah seems to me beyond doubt. Any other view involves the paradox that a world religion claiming at the present day over a hundred million adherents was founded by one, who, not being peculiarly religious, was nevertheless capable of stimulating religious enthusiasm so perfectly that his first essays in that style constitute for all Muslims and even for many who are not Muslims the clearest possible evidence of his prophetic genius."

(E. H. Palmer, *The Koran*, London 1928 : Introduction, p. x.)

" I doubt whether any man whose external conditions changed so much ever changed himself less to meet them."

(R. V. C. Bodley, *The Messenger*, London 1946, p. 9.)

" That his (Muhammad's) reforms enhanced the status of women in general is universally admitted."

(H. A. R. Gibb, *Mohammedanism*, London 1953, p. 33.)

" At the outset let it be said that Muhammad was one of the great figures of history. . . . His ability as a statesman faced with problems of extraordinary complexity is truly amazing."

(Alfred Guillaume, *Islam*, Harmondsworth, London, 1954, p. 2.)

" We might call him a poet or a prophet, for we feel that the words which he speaks are not the words of an ordinary man. They have their immediate source in the inner reality of things, since he lives in constant fellowship with this reality."

(Tor Andrae, *Mohammed,* London 1936, p. 247.)

" But if we would be fair to him we must not forget that, consciously or unconsciously, we Christians are inclined to compare Muhammad with the unsurpassed and exalted figures whom we meet in the Gospels."

(Ibid., p. 269.)

" His deportment, in general, was calm and equable ; he sometimes indulged in pleasantry, but more commonly was grave and dignified, though he is said to have possessed a smile of captivating sweetness. His complexion was more ruddy than is usual with Arabs, and in his excited and enthusiastic moments there was a glow and radiance in his countenance, which his disciples magnified into the supernatural light of prophecy.

" His intellectual qualities were undoubtedly of an extraordinary kind. He had a quick apprehension, a retentive memory, a vivid imagination and an inventive genius.

" He was sober and abstemious in his diet, and a rigorous observer of fasts. He indulged in no magnificence of apparel, the ostentation of a petty mind ; neither was his simplicity in dress affected but a result of a real disregard for distinction from so trivial a source."

(Ibid., p. 192.)

" His military triumphs awakened no pride nor vain glory, as they would have done had they been effected for selfish purposes. In the time of his greatest power he maintained the same simplicity of manners and appearance as in the days of his adversity. So far from affecting regal state, he was displeased if, on entering a room, any unusual testimonial of respect were shown him. If he aimed at universal dominion, it was the dominion of the faith ; as to the temporal rule which grew up in his hands, as he used it without ostentation, so he took no step to perpetuate it in his family."

(*Ibid.*, p. 199.)

" His readiness to undergo persecutions for his beliefs, the high moral character of the men who believed in him and looked up to him as leader, and the greatness of his ultimate achievement — all argue his fundamental integrity. To suppose Muhammad an impostor raises more problems than it solves. Moreover, none of the great figures of history is so poorly appreciated in the West as Muhammad. . . . Thus, not merely must we credit Muhammad with essential honesty and integrity of purpose, if we are to understand him at all ; if we are to correct the errors we have inherited from the past, we must in every particular case hold firmly to the belief in his sincerity until the opposite is conclusively proved ; and we must not forget that conclusive proof is a much stricter requirement than a show of plausibility, and in a matter such as this only to be attained with difficulty."

(W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca*, Oxford 1953, p. 52.)

" In the familiar offices of life he (Muhammad) scrupulously adhered to the grave and ceremonious politeness of his country ; his respectful attention to the rich and powerful was dignified by his condescension and affability to the poorest citizens of Mecca ; the frankness of his manner concealed the artifice of his views ; and the habits of courtesy were imputed to personal friendship or universal benevolence. His memory was capacious and retentive, his wit easy and social, his imagination sublime, his judgment clear, rapid and decisive. He possessed the courage of both thought and action ; and although his design might gradually expand with his success the first idea which he entertained of his divine mission bears the stamp of an original and superior genius."

(Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, London 1838-39, Vol. V, p. 335.)

" His behaviour was now also the standard for his people after his death : inexorable against his enemies so long as they opposed him, yet he did not know revengefulness ; he was gentle towards the vanquished, indulgent and tolerant to all unbelievers ; and even when, in spreading his doctrine, he was compelled by the circumstances to use the sword, the conquered were by no means forced to accept his faith ; later also in the Muslim States the unbelievers had only a small tax upon them."

(*Mahomed und sein Werk,* p. 267, as quoted by Dr. Zaki Ali in his *Islam in the World,* Lahore 1938, p. 13.)

" Never claiming divine powers at any period of his mission, this very human prophet of God made his first converts in his own family, in his own aristocratic gens (people), and had such a remarkable personal influence over all with whom he was brought into contact that, neither when a poverty-stricken and hunted fugitive, nor at the height of his prosperity, did he ever have to complain of treachery from those who had once embraced his faith. His confidence in himself, and in his inspiration from on high, was even greater when he was suffering under disappointment and defeat than when he was able to dictate his own terms to his conquered enemies. Muhammad died as he had lived, surrounded by his early followers, friends and votaries : his death as devoid of mystery as his life of disguise."

(H. M. Hyndman, *The Awakening of Asia,* London 1919-20, p. 9.)

" It is certain that Mahomet himself, with all his prophetic enthusiasm, was a tolerant man. Undoubtedly he was so as to Judaism and Christianity."

(Rev. John Owen, *Sceptics of the Italian Renaissance,* London 1893, p. 64.)

" The sincerity of Muhammad's prophetic convictions is beyond dispute. Religious genius was the most forcefully developed aspect of his personality, and with it was combined an extraordinary political capacity. His enthusiastic perseverance in Mecca was a manifestation of his struggle for an idea which so possessed him that he shunned no means of realizing it. His extraordinary personal influence, which undoubtedly contributed to his success, has left an indelible impress on Islam."

(Joseph Schacht, *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences,* Vol. X, 1933, quoted by Dr. Zaki Ali in his *Islam in the World,* Lahore 1938, p. 15.)

"The essential sincerity of Muhammad's nature cannot be questioned: and an historical criticism that blinks no fact, yields nothing to credulity, weighs every testimony, has no partisan interest, and seeks only the truth, must acknowledge his claim to belong to that order of prophets who, whatever the nature of their physical experience may have been, in diverse times, in diverse manners, have admonished, taught and uttered austere and sublime thoughts, laid down principles of conduct nobler than those they found, and devoted themselves fearlessly to their high calling, being irresistibly impelled to their ministry by a power within."

(Professor Nathaniel Schmidt, *The New International Encyclopaedia,* 1916, Vol. XVI, p. 72, quoted by Dr. Zaki Ali in his *Islam in the World,* Lahore 1938, p. 15.)

"It is hardly too bold an assertion that to Muhammad we owe the facts that Christianity has not joined the ranks of vanished creeds."

(W. M. Thompson, *Democratic Readings,* p. 73.)

"The spectacular success of Muhammad in unifying the tribes of Arabia under the worship of the one God, Allah, and in perpetuating his own name as Allah's prophet, can hardly fail to excite both wonder and admiration. The dire poverty which he endured so courageously in Medina is well known. His dwelling was a hut with a minimum of furniture. . . . This was a man who could inspire his followers with zeal, and the love for himself. He was calm in danger, and in the cave of Thaur assured Abu Bakr that God was with them. He showed a Spartan endurance of utter poverty, which he shared with his converts in Medina. By abolishing alcohol and prostitution he made an undoubted reformation in the life of Arabia."

(Rev. R. Macgregor, *Yorkshire Post* for 8th June 1935.)

"Truly Mohammed when he instituted the pilgrimage did more than impose a religious duty; his genius evolved a means of perpetual communication with the remotest corners of the Moslem world. The naked savage from Central Africa . . . is there clothed in the simple linen shirt of the ceremony; the Indian prince, discarding his silken robes, dons the same simple attire. Thus they are made equal in the sight of God.

"In Mecca they meet in a spirit of brotherhood purely Mohammedan. There they exchange ideas and discuss events which

have taken place in their widely-flung countries, and when at length they return to their native lands, they are surrounded by their relatives and friends eager to listen to the tales of their experiences. The most highly organized European Press propaganda sinks into insignificance compared with this gigantic dissemination of ideas."

(N. N. E. Bray, *Shifting Sands,* London 1937, p. 16.)

"Muhammad is by many seen only through the fog which dread and ignorance have spread around him. To them he is an object of horror against which anything evil might be said. . . . But, now the mists of prejudice have cleared away, we can afford to see the founder of Islam in a fairer light."

(Bishop Boyd Carpenter, *The Permanent Element in Religion,* p. 30.)

"It is greatly to his (Muhammad's) praise that on this occasion (conquest of Mecca), when his resentment for ill-usage in the past might naturally have incited him to revenge, he restrained his army from all shedding of blood, and showed every sign of humility and thanksgiving to Allah for His goodness. . . . Ten or twelve men who had on a former occasion shown a barbarous spirit were proscribed, and of them four were put to death, but this must be considered exceedingly humane, in comparison with the acts of other conquerors; in comparison, for example, with the cruelty of the Crusaders, who, in 1099, put seventy thousand Muslims, men, women and helpless children, to death when Jerusalem fell into their hands; or with that of the English army, also fighting under the Cross, which in the year of grace 1874 burned an African capital, in its war on the Gold Coast. Muhammad's victory was in very truth one of religion and not of politics; he rejected every token of personal homage, and declined all regal authority; and when the haughty chiefs of the Koreishites appeared before him he asked:

'What can you expect at my hands?'

'Mercy, O generous brother!'

'Be it so; you are free!' he exclaimed."

(Arthur Gilman, *The Saracens,* London 1887, pp. 184-85.)

"The ignorance displayed by most Christians regarding the Muslim religion is appalling. They overlook the fact that a religion which is accepted and followed by a sixth of the human race must have a great deal of good in it and be built on very sound founda-

tions, for it is absurd to suppose that it should form the conduct of such a multitude of people and have no solid foundations on which to rest. Mohammed alone, among the nations at that time, believed in one God to the exclusion of all others. He insisted on righteousness as the source of conduct, of filial duty, and on frequent prayers to the Ever-living God, and of respect to all other peoples, and of justice and mercy to all. He believed in total abstinence from intoxicants, and in moderation in all things, and to hold in great respect learning of every kind. . . . Most of the absurdities which Christians would have us believe to exist in the Quran were never uttered by Mohammed himself, nor are they to be found in a correct translation of the work."

(G. Lindsay Johnson, F.R.C.S., in *The Two Worlds*, Manchester, for 9th August 1940.)

" Mahomed established his religious system in a manner not only suitable to the sentiments of his compatriots, to their understanding and to the dominating customs of their country, but beyond this, so proportioned to the common ideas of mankind, that he converted more than one half of all human beings to his opinions and all this in less than forty years. Thus it seemed that it was sufficient to cause the doctrine to be heard too, thereby subjecting the minds to it."

(Le Comte de Boulainvilliers, *La Vie de Mahomet*, Amsterdam 1731, pp. 143-144.)

" Never has a man set for himself, voluntarily or involuntarily, a more sublime aim, since this aim was superhuman : to subvert superstitions which had been interposed between man and his Creator, to render God unto man and man unto God ; to restore the rational and sacred idea of divinity amidst the chaos of the material and disfigured gods of idolatry, then existing. Never has a man undertaken a work so far beyond human power with so feeble means, for he (Muhammad) had in the conception as well as in the execution of such a great design no other instrument than himself, and no other aid, except a handful of men living in a corner of the desert. Finally, never has a man accomplished such a huge and lasting revolution in the world, because in less than two centuries after its appearance, Islam, in faith and in arms, reigned over the whole of Arabia, and conquered, in God's name, Persia, Khorasan, Transoxania, Western India, Syria, Egypt, Abyssinia, all the known continent of Northern Africa, numerous islands of the Mediterranean, Spain, and a part of Gaul.

" If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astounding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could dare to compare any great man in modern history with Muhammad? The most famous men created arms, laws and empires only. They founded, if anything at all, no more than material powers which often crumbled away before their eyes. This man moved not only armies, legislations, empires, peoples and dynasties, but millions of men in one-third of the then inhabited world ; and more than that, he moved the altars, the gods, the religions, the ideas, the beliefs and the souls. On the basis of a Book, every letter of which has become law, he created a spiritual nationality which blended together peoples of every tongue and of every race. He has left us as the indelible characteristic of this Muslim nationality the hatred of false gods and the passion for the One and Immaterial God. This avenging patriotism against the profanation of Heaven formed the virtue of the followers of Muhammad ; the conquest of one-third of the earth to his dogma was his miracle ; or rather it was not the miracle of a man but that of reason. The idea of the unity of God, proclaimed amidst the exhaustion of fabulous theogonies, was in itself such a miracle that upon its utterance from his lips it destroyed all the ancient temples of idols and set on fire one-third of the world. His life, his meditations, his heroic revilings against the superstitions of his country, and his boldness in defying the furies of idolatry, his firmness in enduring them for fifteen years at Mecca, his acceptance of the role of public scorn and almost of being a victim of his fellow countrymen : all these and, finally, his flight, his incessant preaching, his wars against odds, his faith in his success and his superhuman security in misfortune, his forbearance in victory, his ambition, which was entirely devoted to one idea and in no manner striving for an empire ; his endless prayers, his mystic conversations with God, his death and his triumph after death : all these attest not to an imposture but to a firm conviction which gave him the power to restore a dogma. This dogma was twofold, the unity of God and the immateriality of God ; the former telling what God is, the latter telling what God is not ; the one overthrowing false gods with the sword, the other starting an idea with the words.

" Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult without images ; the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he ? "

(Lamartine, *Histoire de la Turquie*, Paris 1854, Vol. II, pp. 276-277).

" He (Muhammad) is, in fact, the promoter of the first social and international revolution of which history gives mention. . . . He lays the foundations of a State which is to spread over the whole world and to observe no other laws than those of justice and of charity. He preaches the equality of all men and the duty of mutual aid and of universal fraternity."

(Raymund Lerouge, *Vie de Mahomet*, pp. 18-19.)

" A master was enjoined to make his slave share the bounties he received from God. . . . He (Muhammad) recommended to set free slaves who demand it, and he himself gave the example in setting free all his slaves shortly before his death. . . . It must be recognized that, in this respect, the Islamic teaching acknowledged such a respect for human personality and showed a sense of equality which is searched for in vain in ancient civilizations."

(P. L. Rivière in *Revue Bleue* for June 1939.)

" It is impossible for anyone who studies the life and character of the great Prophet of Arabia, who knows how he taught and how he lived, to feel anything but reverence for that mighty Prophet, one of the great messengers of the Supreme. And although in what I put to you I shall say many things which may be familiar to many, yet I myself feel, whenever I re-read them, a new way of admiration, a new sense of reverence for that mighty Arabian teacher."

(Annie Besant, *The Life and Teachings of Muhammad*, Madras 1932, p. 4.)

"I know the Mussalman mind much better than I did two years ago. I was interested in the religious side of Urdu literature and therefore plunged, as soon as I was able, into Urdu religious books. Fates have always favoured me. Maulana Hasrat Mohani had sent to Mr. Manzar Ali *Leaves from the Lives of the Companions of the Prophet.* As he was teaching me Urdu, he passed the volumes on to me. And I went through them with the greatest diligence. The volumes, though they contain repetitions and would gain in lucidity by compression, were to me deeply interesting for the insight they gave me into the doings of the Prophet's many companions. How their lives were transformed as if by magic, what devotion they showed to the Prophet, how utterly unmindful they became of worldly wealth, how they used power itself for showing the utter simplicity of their lives, how they were untouched by the lust for gold, how reckless they were of their own lives in a cause they held sacred, is all told with a wealth of detail that carries conviction with it. When one notes their lives and then the lives of the present-day representatives of Islam in India, one is inclined to shed a tear of bitter grief.

"I passed from the companions to the Prophet himself. The two bulky volumes written by Maulana Shibli are a creditable performance. But I have the same complaints about them that I have lodged about the diffuseness of the volumes devoted to the companions. But the diffuseness did not interfere with my interest to know how a Mussalman had treated the incidents of the life of one who has been almost uniformly maligned and abused in the West. When I closed the second volume, I was sorry there was not more for me to read of that great life. There are incidents in it which I do not understand, there are some I cannot explain. But I did not approach the study as a critic or a scoffer. I wanted to know the best of the life of one who holds today undisputed sway over the hearts of millions of mankind. And I found enough in the volumes to account for it. I became more than ever convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet, the scrupulous regard for pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle. As I do not regard any human being as absolutely perfect, be he a prophet or an avatar, it is unnecessary for me to be able to explain to the censor's satisfaction every detail of the Prophet's life. It is enough for me to know that he was a man among millions who tried to walk in the fear of God, died a poor man, wanted no grand mausoleum for his mortal remains and did not forget even on

his death bed the least of his creditors. The teaching of the Prophet is no more responsible for the degrading intolerance or questionable proselytising methods that one sees around oneself than Hinduism is responsible for the degradation and intolerance of present-day Hindus.

" From the Prophet I passed to the two volumes devoted to the life of Umar the unconquerable. As I pictured him before my mental eye walking to Jerusalem upbraiding some of his followers for aping the pomp of their neighbours, refusing to pray in a Christian church lest succeeding generations might claim to convert it into a mosque, granting the most liberal terms to the conquered Christians, and as I picture him declaring that the word of a follower of Islam, though pledged by one not authorized thereto, was as good as the written decree of the great Caliph himself, he commands my humble respect. His was an iron will. He weighed out the same justice to his daughter that he would weigh out to an utter stranger. I fancy I understand the breaking of idols and wanton desecration of temples, the thoughtless intolerance of Hindu music now going on in our midst. These acts seem to me to be due to an utter misreading of the events in the life of the greatest of the Caliphs. I fear that the acts of this great and just man are being presented to the Mussalman masses in a most distorted fashion. I know that if he rose from his grave, he would disown the many acts of the so-called followers of Islam which are a crude caricature of those of the Great Umar himself.

" From this entrancing study, I went to the philosophical volumes called Al-Quran. These are difficult to understand. The language is highly technical. Mr. Abdul Gani, however, made my study fairly easy. I was only sorry my illness interrupted my study when I had only half finished the volumes."

(Mahatma Gandhi, *Young India,* quoted in *The Light,* Ahmadiyyah Building, Lahore-7, West Pakistan, for 16th September 1924.)

" Muhammad, the inspired man who founded Islam, was born about A.D. 570 into an Arabian tribe that worshipped idols. Orphaned at birth, he was always particularly solicitous of the poor and the needy, the widow and the orphan, the slave and the downtrodden. At twenty he was already a successful business man, and soon became director of camel caravans for a wealthy widow. When he reached twenty-five his employer, recognizing his merit,

proposed marriage. Even though she was fifteen years the older, he married her, and as long as she lived remained a devoted husband.

" By forty this man of the desert had secured for himself a most satisfying life : a loving wife, fine children and wealth. Then in a series of dramatic and terrifying events, he began to receive through the Archangel Gabriel a revelation of God's word.

" Like almost every major prophet before him, Muhammad fought shy of serving as the transmitter of God's word, sensing his own inadequacy. But the angel commanded, ' Read '. So far as we know, Muhammad was unable to read or write, but he began to dictate those inspired words which would soon revolutionize a large segment of the earth : ' There is but one God '.

" Muhammad's message infuriated those rich Arabs whose faith required many idols, and he and his new followers were driven from Mecca, his home. Forced now to fight in defence of the freedom of conscience which he preached, he became an accomplished military leader. Although he repeatedly went into battle outnumbered and outspeared as much as five to one, he won some spectacular victories.

" Later he became head of the state, and the testimony even of his enemies is that he administered wisely. The wisdom he displayed in judging intricate cases became the basis for the religious law that governs Islam today. In his final years he was invited to become a dictator or a saint, but he rejected both temptations, insisting that he was an average man to whom God had sent another of His periodic messages to the world.

" By the force of his extraordinary personality, Muhammad revolutionized life in Arabia and throughout the East. With his own hands he smashed ancient idols and established a religion dedicated to one God. He lifted women from the bondage in which desert custom held them and preached general social justice.

" Muslims think it particularly ironic when Muhammad is charged by Western writers with having established a voluptuous religion. Among drunkards he abolished alcohol, so that even today all good Muslims are prohibitionists. Among the lazy he ordained individual ritual prayers five times each day. In a nation that revelled in feasting he instituted a most rigorous daytime fast lasting a full month each year.

" Western writers have based their charges of voluptuousness mainly on the question of women. Before Muhammad, however, men were encouraged to take innumerable wives ; he limited them

to four only, and the Koran is explicit that husbands who are unable to maintain strict equality between two or more wives must confine themselves to one. . . .

" In all things Muhammad was profoundly practical. When his beloved son Ibrahim died, an eclipse occurred, and rumours of God's personal condolence quickly arose. Whereupon Muhammad is said to have announced, ' An eclipse is a phenomenon of nature. It is foolish to attribute such things to the death or birth of a human being '.

" At Muhammad's own death an attempt was made to deify him, but the man who was to become his administrative successor killed the hysteria with one of the noblest speeches in religious history : ' If there are any among you who worshipped Muhammad, he is dead. But if it is God you worshipped, He lives for ever '."

(James A. Michener, " Islam : The Misunderstood Religion," in *The Reader's Digest* (American edition) for May 1955, pp. 68-70.)

" Mohammad was of middle height, rather thin but broad of shoulder, wide of chest, strong of bone and muscle. His head was massive, strongly developed. Dark hair, slightly curled, flowed in a dense mass almost to his shoulders ; even in advanced age it was sprinkled with only about twenty grey hairs, produced by the agonies of his ' Revelations '. His face was oval-shaped, slightly tawny of colour. Fine long arched eyebrows were divided by a vein, which throbbed visibly in moments of passion. Great black restless eyes shone out from under long heavy eyelashes. His nose was large, slightly aquiline. His teeth, upon which he bestowed great care, were well set, dazzling white. A full beard framed his manly face. His skin was clear and soft, his complexion ' red and white '. His hands were as ' silk and satin ', even as those of a woman. His step was quick and elastic, yet firm as that of one who steps ' from a high to a low place '. In turning his face, he would also turn his whole body. His whole gait and presence was dignified and imposing. His countenance was mild and pensive. His laugh was rarely more than a smile.

" In his habits he was extremely simple, although he bestowed great care on his person. His eating and drinking, his dress and his furniture retained, even when he had reached the fullness of power, their almost primitive nature. The only luxuries he indulged in were arms, which he highly prized, and a pair of yellow boots, a present from the Negus of Abyssinia. Perfumes, however, he loved passionately, being most sensitive to smells. Strong drink he abhorred.

" . . . He was gifted with mighty powers of imagination, elevation of mind, delicacy and refinement of feeling. ' He is more modest than a virgin behind her curtain,' it was said of him. He was most indulgent to his inferiors, and would never allow his little page to be scolded whatever he did. ' Ten years,' said Anas, his servant, ' I was about the Prophet, and he never said as much as " uff " to me '. He was very affectionate towards his family. One of his boys died on his breast in the smoky house of the nurse, a blacksmith's wife. He was very fond of children ; he would stop them in the streets and pat their little heads. He never struck anyone in his life. The worst expression he ever made use of in conversation was, ' What has come to him? May his forehead become darkened with mud ! ' When asked to curse someone he replied, ' I have not been sent to curse, but to be a mercy to mankind '. ' He visited the sick, followed any bier he met, accepted the invitation of a slave to dinner, mended his own clothes, milked the goats, and waited upon himself,' relates summarily another tradition. He never first withdrew his hand out of another man's palm, and turned not before the other had turned.

" He was the most faithful protector of those he protected, the sweetest and most agreeable in conversation. Those who saw him were suddenly filled with reverence : those who came near him loved him ; they who described him would say, ' I have never seen his like either before or after '. He was of great taciturnity, but when he spoke it was with emphasis and deliberation, and no one could forget what he said."

(The Speeches and Table-Talk of the Prophet Muhammad, by Stanley Lane-Poole, London 1882. Introduction, pp. 27-29.)

" Under Christianity there was certainly more cruelty than under early Islam. The Caliph Abu Bakr had given to his followers three injunctions : Be just, die rather than yield. Be merciful, slay neither old men, children nor women. Destroy neither fruit trees, grain nor cattle. Keep your word even to your enemies."

(J. M. Robertson, *A Short History of Christianity,* p. 4.)

" History makes it clear, however, that the legend of fanatical Muslims sweeping through the world and forcing Islam at the point of the sword upon conquered races is one of the most fantastically absurd myths that historians have ever repeated."

(De Lacy O'Leary, *Islam at the Crossroads,* London 1923, p. 8.)

" Incidentally these well-established facts dispose of the idea so widely fostered in Christian writings that the Muslims, wherever they went, forced people to accept Islam at the point of the sword."

(Lawrence E. Browne, *The Prospects of Islam,* London 1944, p. 14.)

" The picture of the Muslim soldiers advancing with a sword in one hand and a Koran in the other is quite false."

(A. S. Tritton, *Islam,* London 1951, p. 21.)

" The day of Mohammad's greatest triumph over his enemies was also the day of his grandest victory over himself. He freely forgave the Koraysh all the years of sorrow and cruel scorn in which they had afflicted him and gave an amnesty to the whole population of Mekka. Four criminals whom justice condemned made up Mohammad's proscription list when he entered as a conqueror to the city of his bitterest enemies. The army followed his example, and entered quietly and peacefully ; no house was robbed, no woman insulted. One thing alone suffered destruction. Going to the Kaaba, Mohammad stood before each of the three hundred and sixty idols, and pointed to it with his staff, saying, ' Truth is come and falsehood is fled away ! ' and at these words his attendants hewed them down, and all the idols and household gods of Mekka and round about were destroyed.

" It was thus Mohammad entered again his native city. Through all the annals of conquest there is no triumphant entry comparable to this one."

(Stanley Lane-Poole, *The Speeches and Table-Talk of the Prophet Mohammad,* London 1882. Introduction, pp. 46-47.)

" Muhammad was a prophet, not a theologian, a fact so evident that one is loath to state it. The men who surrounded him and constituted the influential *élite* of the primitive Muslim community, contented themselves with obeying the law that he had proclaimed in the name of Allah and with following his teaching and example. They had a simple, robust faith that was satisfied with a small number of formulae and a few rites."

(Maurice Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Muslim Institutions, London* 1950, p. 29.)

" This child (Muhammad) was destined to become the greatest Arab who ever lived and one of the most influential figures of all time."

(J. Christy Wilson, *Introducing Islam,* New York 1950, p. 6.)

" It must, however, be borne in mind that the Koran plays a far greater role among the Muhammadans than does the Bible in Christianity in that it provides not only the canon of their faith, but also the text-book of their ritual and the principles of their Civil Law.

" It must not, however, be forgotten that the central doctrine preached by Muhammad . . . was the unity of God, and that the simplicity of his creed was probably a more potent factor in the spread of Islam than the sword of the Ghazis.

" Islam, although seriously affecting the Christian world, brought a spiritual religion to one half of Asia, and it is an amazing circumstance that the Turks, who on several occasions let loose their Central Asian hordes over India and the Middle East, though irresistible in the onslaught of their arms, were all conquered in their turn by the faith of Islam, and founded Muhammadan dynasties. . . .

" Thus through all the vicissitudes of thirteen hundred years the Koran has remained the sacred book of all the Turks and Persians and of nearly a quarter of the population of India. Surely such a book as this deserves to be widely read in the West, more especially in these days when space and time have been almost annihilated by modern invention and when public interest embraces the whole world."

(E. Denison Ross, Introduction to *The Koran,* by George Sale, London, pp. v-vii.)

" In their wars of conquest, however, the Muslims exhibited a degree of toleration which puts many Christian nations to shame."

(E. Alexander Powell, *The Struggle for Power in Moslem Asia,* New York 1923, p. 48.)

" For centuries before the coming of Mohammed, the Prophet of Allah, the Arabs had been the poor, proud, hard-living and hard-fighting men of the desert and its oases. . . . If economic causes and desire for material domination had been their incentives to war and conquest, there was as much reason for their outbreak, and apparently many better chances of their success, before, than after, the advent of Mohammed."

(H. M. Hyndman, *The Awakening of Asia,* London 1919, p. 10.)

" The Jihad was not really obligatory except against peoples who had no revealed religion or who menaced the existence of Islam. . . . Jihad had to be waged to defend Islam against aggressions. . . . Once the war was terminated the Muslims always displayed a great tolerance towards the conquered peoples, leaving them their legislation and religious beliefs."

(O. Houdes, *La Grande Encyclopaedia,* 1894, Tome 20, p. 1006.)

" In his private dealings he was just. He treated friends and strangers, the rich and poor, the powerful and the weak, with equity, and was beloved by the common people for the affability with which he received them, and listened to their complaints."

(Washington Irving, *Mahomet and his Successors,* London 1909, p. 193.)

" The Quran in its original Arabic dress has a seductive beauty and charm of its own. Couched in concise and exalted style, its brief pregnant sentences, often rhymed, possess an expressive force and explosive energy which it is extremely difficult to convey by literal word for word translation."

(John Naish, M.A. (Oxon.), D.D., *The Wisdom of the Quran,* Oxford 1937, preface p. viii.)

CHAPTER XII

NON-MUSLIMS ON POLYGAMY AND THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN ISLAM

. . . under Islamic Law the capacities of woman were in general much more extended than they are today according to the conception of law."

(*La Vie Juridique des Peuples,* Vol. VII, edited by Levy-Ullman and Mirkine-Guetzevitch, Paris 1939, p. 154).

"In fact most Mohammedans in all ages have had only one wife."

(William Kelly Wright, *Philosophy of Religions,* New York, 1935, p. 508).

"Whether the question is considered socially, ethically or religiously, it can be demonstrated that polygamy is not contrary to the highest standards of civilization. . . . The suggestion offers a practical remedy for the problem of the destitute and unwanted female; the alternative is continual and increased prostitution, concubinage and distressing spinsterhood."

(J. E. Clare McFarlane, *The Case for Polygamy,* London, 1934, p. 30.)

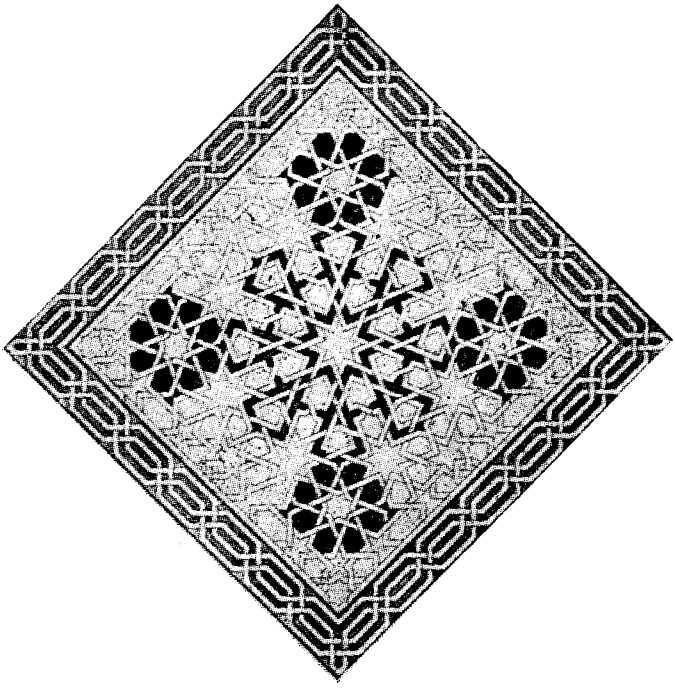
"You can find others stating that the religion (Islam) is evil, because it sanctions a limited polygamy. But you do not hear as a rule the criticism which I spoke out one day in a London hall where

I knew that the audience was entirely uninstructed. I pointed out to them that monogamy with a blended mass of prostitution was a hypocrisy and more degrading than a limited polygamy. Naturally a statement like that gives offence, but it has to be made, because it must be remembered that the law of Islam in relation to women was until lately, when parts of it have been imitated in England, the most just law, as far as women are concerned, to be found in the world. Dealing with property, dealing with rights of succession and so on, dealing with cases of divorce, it was far beyond the law of the West, in the respect which was paid to the rights of women. Those things are forgotten while people are hypnotised by the words Monogamy and Polygamy and do not look at what lies behind it in the West — the frightful degradation of women who are thrown into the streets when their first protectors, weary of them, no longer give them any assistance."

(Annie Besant, *The Life and Teachings of Muhammad,* Madras, June 1932, p. 3.)

"I often think that woman is more free in Islam than in Christianity. Woman is more protected by Islam than by the faith which preaches monogamy. In Al-Qur'án the law about woman is more just and liberal. It is only in the last twenty years that Christian England has recognized the right of woman to property, while Islam has allowed this right from all times . . . It is a slander to say that Islam preaches that women have no souls."

(Ibid, page 25 and 26.)



A tile in the world-famous Moorish palace, The Alhambra, at Granada, Spain.

PART IV

CHAPTER XIII

نه تنها عشق از دیدار خیزد

بسا کین دولت از گفتار خیزد

"Not through sight alone is love lit —
For gracious words will kindle it."

SELECTIONS FROM THE QUR'AN AND SOME SAYINGS OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD

Actions will be judged according to intentions.

The proof of a Muslim's sincerity is that he payeth no heed to that which is not his business.

Of Abstinence

The nearest to me are the abstinent, whoever they are, wherever they are.

A man once said to Muhammad, "O, Messenger of God, permit me to become a eunuch." He said, "That person is not of me who maketh another a eunuch, or becometh so himself; because the manner in which my followers become eunuchs is by fasting and abstinence." The man said, "Permit me to retire from society, and to abandon the delights of the world." He said, "The retirement that becometh my followers is to live in this world and yet to sit in the corner of a mosque in expectation of prayers."

Keep fast and eat also, stay awake at night and sleep also, for verily there is a duty on you to your body, not to labour overmuch, so that ye may not get ill and destroy yourselves; and verily there is a duty on you to your eyes, ye must sometimes sleep and give them rest; and verily there is a duty on you to your wife, and to your visitors and guests that come to see you; ye must talk to them; and nobody hath kept fast who fasted always. . . ."

Of Adultery

Ye followers of Muhammad, I swear by God, there is not anything which God so abhors as adultery.

Of Aged Persons

Verily, to honour an old man is showing respect to God.

Of Alms-Giving

The best of alms is that which the right hand giveth and the left hand knoweth not of.

Of Charity

Charity that is concealed appeaseth the wrath of God.

Charity is a duty unto every Muslim. He who hath not the means thereto, let him do a good act or abstain from an evil one. That is his charity.

Every good act is charity.

Of Chastity

Modesty and chastity are parts of the Faith.

Of Christians and Jews

Muhammad once referred to strife, and said, "It will appear at the time of knowledge leaving the world". Zayd said, "O Messenger of God, how will knowledge go from the world, since we read the Quran, and teach it to our children, and our children to theirs, and so on till the last day?" Then Muhammad said, "O Zayd, I supposed you the most learned man of Medinah. Do the Jews and Christians who read the Bible and the Evangel act on them?"

When the bier of anyone passeth by thee, whether Jew, Christian or Muslim, rise to thy feet.

Of Cleanliness

Were it not for fear of troubling my disciples, verily I would order them to clean their teeth before every prayer.

God is pure and loveth purity and cleanliness.

Of Compassion

There is no reward but Paradise for a Muslim who suffereth with patience when the soul of his affectionate friend is taken.

Once Muhammad went together with some of his companions to Abu Yusuf, a blacksmith, who was a husband of the nurse of Muhammad's son Ibrahim. And the Apostle of God took him and embraced him. On another occasion they went to see Ibrahim, when he was in dying moments. Then the eyes of Muhammad were fixed, and flowering with tears; and Abd-al-Rahman, son of Auf, said to the Messenger of God, "Do you weep and shed tears, O Apostle of God?" He said, "O son of Auf, these tears are compassion, and feeling due to the dead". After that he shed tears again, and said, "Verily my eyes shed tears and my heart is afflicted, and I say nothing but what is pleasing to my Benefactor; for verily, O Ibrahim, I am melancholy at being separated from thee."

(The disciples expected the Messenger of God to be above tears and smiles.)

Of Conscience

A man asked Muhammad what was the mark whereby he might know the reality of his faith. Muhammad said, "If thou derive pleasure from the good which thou hast performed and thou be grieved for the evil which thou hast committed, thou art a true believer". The man said, "In what doth a fault really consist?" Muhammad said, "When an action pricketh thy conscience, forsake it".

Of Self-Control

The most excellent Jihad (Holy War) is that for the conquest of the self.

The exercise of religious duty will not atone for the fault of an abusive tongue.

A man cannot be a Muslim till his heart and tongue are so.

Riches are not from abundance of worldly goods, but from a contented mind.

God loveth those who are content.

Of Courtesy

Verily, for a man to teach his child manners is better for him than to give one bushel of grain in alms.

No father has given his child anything better than good manners.

Respect people according to their eminence.

Of Cultivation of Land

There is no Muslim who planteth a tree, or soweth a field, and man, birds or beasts eat from them, but it is charity for him.

Whoever bringeth the dead land to life again, that is cultivateth waste land, for him is reward therein.

Of The Dead

And behold! A bier passed by Muhammad, and he stood up; and it was said to him, "This bier is a bier of a Jew". He said, "Was it not the holder of a soul, from which we should take example and fear?"

Do not speak ill of the dead.

The faithful do not die; perhaps they become translated from this perishable world to the world of eternal existences.

Of Death

Death is a blessing to a Muslim. Remember and speak well of your dead, and refrain from speaking ill of them.

Of Disposition

Verily, the most beloved of you by me, and the nearest to me in the next world, are those of good dispositions; and verily, the greatest enemies to me and farthest from me are the ill-tempered.

Of Divorce

The thing which is lawful, but disliked by God, is divorce.

Of the Duties of Believers

I have left two things among you, and you will not stray so long as you hold them fast. One is the Book of God, the other the Laws of His Messenger.

When you speak, speak the truth; perform when you promise; discharge your trust; commit not fornication; be chaste; have no impure desires; withhold your hands from striking and taking that which is unlawful or evil. The best of God's servants are those who, when seen, remind of God; and the worst of God's servants are those who carry tales about, to do mischief and separate friends, and who seek for the defects of the good.

No man is a true believer unless he desireth for his brother that which he desireth for himself.

It is better to sit alone than in company with the bad; and it is better to sit with the good than alone. And it is better to speak words to a seeker of knowledge than to remain silent; and silence is better than bad words.

He is not of us who is not affectionate to his little ones, and doth not respect the feelings of the aged; and he is not of us who doth not order that which is good and prohibit that which is evil.

Verily, each of you is a mirror to his brother; then if he seeth a vice in his brother he must tell him to get rid of it.

That person is not a perfect Muslim who eateth his fill, and leaveth his neighbours hungry.

"Teach me a work, such that when I perform it God and men will love me." Muhammad said, "Desire not the world, and God will love you; and desire not what men have, and they will love you".

Of Envy

If envy were proper, two persons would be the most proper object of it; one, a man to whom God hath given riches, and appointed to bestow in charity; the other, to whom God hath granted the knowledge of religion, and who acteth thereon himself, instructing others.

Of Forgiveness

There is no man who is wounded and pardoneth the giver of the wound but God will exalt his dignity and diminish his faults.

That person is nearest to God who pardoneth when he hath in his power him who would have injured him.

Of Gentleness

Verily, God is mild, and is fond of mildness, and he giveth to the mild what he doth not to the harsh.

God saith, "The person I hold as beloved, I am his hearing by which he heareth, and I am his sight by which he seeth, and I am his hands by which he holdeth, and I am his feet by which he walketh".

Of God's Kindness

God is not merciful to him who is not so to mankind.

Muhammad said, "I would not have the whole wealth of the world for this revelation". "Say (O Muhammad) O my servants who have oppressed your own souls by sinning, despair not of the mercy of God." A man said, "What of him who hath associated others with God?" Muhammad remained silent for a while and then said, "Know that him also God forgiveth; but on repentance".

Of The Heart

Beware! verily, there is a piece of flesh in the body of man, which when good, the whole body is good; and when bad, the whole body is bad, and that is the heart.

Of Heaven and Hell

Hell is veiled in delights, and Heaven in hardships and miseries.

Of Hospitality

He who believeth in one God and in a future life (i.e., a Muslim) let him honour his guest.

Of Islam

Every child is born with a disposition towards the natural religion (Islam — submission to the Divine Will). It is the parents who make it a Jew, Christian or a Magian.

Of Kindness

All God's creatures are His family; and he is the most beloved of God who doeth most good to God's creatures.

Of The Quran

The Quran consisteth of five heads — things lawful, things unlawful, clear and positive precepts, mysteries and examples. Then consider that lawful which is there declared to be so, and that which

is forbidden as unlawful; obey the precepts, believe in the mysteries, and take warning from the examples.

Of Labour

He who neither worketh for himself nor for others, will not receive the reward of God.

Those who earn an honest living are the beloved of God.

Of Learning

He dieth not who taketh to learning.

An hour's contemplation is better than a year's adoration.

Wisdom (learning) is the stray camel of the faithful; take hold of it wherever ye come across it.

Go in quest of knowledge even unto China.

To spend more time in learning is better than spending more time in praying; the support of religion is abstinence. It is better to teach knowledge one hour in the night than to pray the whole night.

One learned man is harder on the devil than a thousand ignorant worshippers.

The ink of a scholar is more holy than the blood of a martyr.

One hour's meditation on the work of the Creator is better than seventy years of prayer.

Acquire knowledge. It enableth its possessor to distinguish right from wrong; it lighteth the way to Heaven; it is our friend in the desert, our society in solitude, our companion when friendless; it guideth us to happiness; it sustaineth us in misery; it is an ornament among friends and an armour against enemies.

(The present-day Muslims should bear in mind this remarkable utterance of the "Illiterate Prophet".)

Learn to know thyself.

Of Monopolies

Monopoly is unlawful in Islam.

The bringers of grain to the city to sell at a cheap price gain immense advantage by it, and whoso keepeth back grain in order to sell at a high rate is cursed.

Of Muhammad the Prophet

I am no more than man; when I order you anything respecting religion receive it, and when I order you anything about the affairs of the world, then I am nothing more than a man.

Of Mothers

Heaven lieth at the feet of mothers.

He who wisheth to enter Paradise at the best door must please his father and mother.

Of Peace-making

Shall I not inform you of a better act than fasting, alms and prayers? Making peace between one another: enmity and malice tear up heavenly rewards by the roots.

Of Prayer

The Lord doth not regard a prayer in which the heart doth not accompany the body.

Say your prayers standing; but if you are not able, sitting; and if unable, on your sides.

Of Progress

Every human being hath two inclinations — one prompting him to good and impelling him thereto, and the other prompting him to evil and thereto impelling him; but Divine assistance is nigh, and he who asketh the help of God in contending with the evil promptings of his own heart obtaineth it.

Of Relatives

He is of the most perfect Muslims, whose disposition is most liked by his own family.

Of Riches

It is difficult for a man laden with riches to climb the steep path that leadeth to bliss.

Feed the hungry and visit the sick, and free the captive, if he be unjustly confined. Assist any person oppressed, whether Muslim or non-Muslim.

Of Wives

"O Apostle of God! What is my duty to my wife?" He said, "That you give her to eat as you eat yourself, and clothe her as you clothe yourself, and do not slap her in the face nor abuse her, nor separate yourself from her in displeasure".

A virtuous wife is a man's best treasure.

Of This World

This world is a prison for the faithful, but Paradise for unbelievers.

Cursed is this world and cursed is all that is in this world, except remembrance of God and that which aideth thereto.

Of Experience

He is not a perfect man of fortitude, who hath not fallen into misfortune; and there is no physician but the experienced.

Of Widows

A giver of maintenance to widows and the poor is like a bestower in the way of God, an utterer of prayers all the night, and a keeper of constant fast.

Of Women

The world and all things in it are valuable; but the most valuable thing in the world is a virtuous woman.

The best women are the virtuous; they are the most affectionate to infants, and the most careful of their husband's property.

God enjoins you to treat women well, for they are your mothers, daughters and aunts.

Whoever hath a daughter and doth not bury her alive, nor scold her, nor prefer his male children to her, may God bring him into Paradise.

Of Orphans

The best Muslim house is that in which is an orphan well cared for.

Of Self-Control

He is wise and sensible who subdueth his carnal desires and hopeth for reward; and he is an ignorant man who followeth his lustful appetites, and with all this asketh Allah's forgiveness.

Of Envy and Suspicion

Envy and suspicion disintegrate society.

Avoid misrepresenting.

Refrain from ascribing false motives to others, neither be suspicious of others' actions.

Suspicion is the blackest lie.

Do not look for the faults of others.

Do not envy others.

Keep yourself far from envy, for it eateth and taketh away good actions, like as fire eateth up and burneth wood.

Of Love of the World

Love of the world is the mother of all evils.

Of Contentment

When thou shalt see one who hath been gifted with more than thyself in money and beauty, then look to those who have been given less.

Look to those inferior to thyself, which is best for thee, that thou mayest not hold God's benefits in contempt.

Be in the world like a traveller, or wayfarer, and reckon thyself as of the dead.

Of Pride

A community must desist from boasting of their ancestors. Mankind are all the sons of Adam, and he was from earth.

The proud will not enter the Blissful Abode.

He shall not enter Paradise who hath in him a single grain of pride.

God is Beauty and delighteth in the beautiful; and pride is holding man in contempt.

A proud monk or mendicant is accursed.

Of Reason and Common Sense

The first thing created was Reason.

God hath not created anything better than Reason, or anything more perfect or more beautiful than Reason. The benefits which Allah giveth are on its account, and understanding is by it; and Allah's displeasure is caused by it, and by it are rewards and punishments.

Of Meekness and Humility

True modesty is the source of all virtues.

All forms of modesty are best.

Meekness and modesty are two branches of Faith.

Humility and courtesy are acts of piety.

Of Repentance

A sincere repenter of faults is like him who hath committed none.

Of Dignity of Labour

Pray to God morning and evening, and spend the day in thy pursuits.

He who worketh neither for himself nor for others, shall not receive the reward of God.

Whoso is able and fit, yet worketh not for himself nor for others, God is not kind to him.

O God, keep me from inability and laziness.

Those who earn an honest living are the beloved of God.

God is gracious to him that earneth his living by his own labour and not by begging.

Of Fulfilment of Promise

"The believers are . . . those who are keepers of their covenants" (Holy Quran, 23 : 8).

"And fulfil the promise" (*Ibid.*, 5 : 1).

One of the stipulations agreed upon in the truce of Hudaibiyyah in 6 A.H. was that if any Meccan, after having accepted Islam, escaped to Medinah, to seek refuge with the

Prophet, then the Prophet should be legally bound to return him to Mecca. No sooner was the treaty signed than Abu Jandal managed to escape from imprisonment and fled to Medinah, to take shelter with the Prophet. Abu Jandal told his tale of sufferings. The Muslims were moved to compassion and indignation. But the Prophet addressed him composedly. "Abu Jandal, have patience; we cannot break our promise. God will create some way for you out of this difficulty."

Of Justice

The Quran says: "Surely Allah enjoins justice" (16 : 90).

"Let not hatred of people incite you not to act equitably; act equitably, that is nearer piety."

A woman belonging to the tribe of Makhzum was found guilty of theft, and her relations requested Usama-bin-Zaid, for whom the Prophet had much regard, to intervene and entreat the Prophet to release her. The Prophet said, "O Usama, do you mean to come to me and intercede against the laws of God?" Then the Prophet convened a meeting and thus addressed them: "Nations which have preceded you have been wiped off the face of the earth, for the one reason only, that they imposed punishment on the poor and relaxed the laws in favour of the rich. I swear by God that if Fatima, my daughter, were to be found guilty of theft, then I would have her hands cut."

Of Sacrificial Spirit

The Quran says, "And they give food out of love for Him to the poor and the orphan and the captive" (76 : 8).

"(They) love those who have fled to them and do not find in their hearts a need of what they are given and prefer them before themselves, though poverty may affect them" (59 : 9).

A companion of the Prophet got married, but he had nothing in his house wherewith to entertain his friends. The Prophet told him to go to Ayesha and request her to give him a sack of flour. He went and brought it back with him. And yet the Prophet's house had nothing else than that which Ayesha had given away, even for the evening meal.

Once a certain man belonging to the clan of Ghaffar stayed with the Prophet. The Prophet had nothing for the evening meal but a little quantity of goat's milk, which he offered to his guest, himself passing the night in hunger.

Of Fairness in Dealing

"And give full measure when you measure" (The Quran, 17 : 35).

" Surely Allah commands you to make over trusts to their owners " (*Ibid.*, 4 : 58).

" Believers . . . are those who are keepers of their trust " (*Ibid.*, 23 : 8).

Once the Prophet borrowed a camel from somebody. When he returned it, he returned a better one for it and said, " The best men are they who pay their debts with fairness of dealing ".

Of Disregard of Distinction

" I am only a man like unto you " (The Quran, 18 : 110).

The Prophet used to join with the companions in their manual labour. After his flight to Medina, his first anxiety was to erect a mosque there, afterwards known as the " Prophet's Mosque ". In the construction of this mosque the Prophet contributed his quota of help in the capacity of a labourer. He brought the bricks. The companions could not dissuade him from performing his duty. They would come around and say with love and affection, " Our lives be sacrificed for you ! Why do you take the trouble of working ? What are we for ? " In the battle of Ahzab, when trenches were being dug, the Prophet worked like an ordinary labourer, so much so that a layer of dust could be seen on his body and forehead.

The Arabs attached no great importance to modesty or shyness. Bathing naked was quite the fashion. The circumambulation of the Ka'aba was performed in a state of nudity. The Prophet, on the other hand, had a strong dislike for absence of modesty, a shyness for bathing naked and the naked circumambulation. The Prophet once said, " Do you go to the public baths ? " And the people answered, " Bathing in a public bath is very useful for diseases, and causes the dirt on the bodies to be removed ". The Prophet said, " When you bathe, do not bathe naked ".

In punishment and retaliation he was very cautious and considerate. He would prefer, as far as possible, forgiveness to punishment. Once a certain man who was guilty of a sin came to the Prophet and confessed it. The Prophet kept silent and turned a deaf ear to his requests until the time of afternoon prayer came. He related the same story once again. The Prophet said, " Have you said your prayers ? " He said, " Yes ". The Prophet said, " Then God has forgiven you ".

Of Praise Discouraged

" Do not think those who rejoice for what they have done and love that they should be praised for what they have not done are safe from the chastisement " (The Quran, 3 : 187).

Praise, however heartfelt, was foreign to the nature of the Prophet. He could never tolerate praise even for his own person. On one occasion when some people were indulging in the usual

personalities, they chanced in the course of their conversation to speak highly of a certain man. The Prophet said, "You have cut the neck of your friend". These words he repeated many times, and then added, "If you ever wish to talk about a person, then you snould say, 'I think so'."

On Sublimity of Manners

"And most surely you conform (yourself) to sublime morality" (The Quran, 68 : 4).

It is related that once, while the Prophet was sitting among his friends, there came to visit him the husband of his wet-nurse. The Prophet spread a corner of his sheet for him to sit upon. Then came the mother of his wet-nurse. He spread the other corner of his sheet for her to sit upon. Then came the brother of his wet-nurse. The Prophet got up and seated him in front of himself.

CHAPTER XIV

CONCLUSION

I must now take cordial leave of my reader, who, I hope, after reading these pages, has become a friend of truth and universal brotherhood.

If I take leave of him, it is only with a tearful eye — tearful because it has been such a great joy to talk to him in these pages, the compilation of which have been a labour of love to me. My sole purpose has been to throw as much light, from as varied angles as possible, on a subject that is so dear to my heart. If I have succeeded in making him love the subject, then I am amply rewarded.

Let him remember that in every corner of this world he has now true brothers. To reach them is so simple ; it does not require more than opening his own heart to them with love. Love, that magical force, welds and cements those millions of human hearts in one great community. That is Islam.

The late Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din. The pioneer of Islam in the West in the twentieth century (b. 1870, d. 28th December 1932).

APPENDIX I

ISLAM, MY ONLY CHOICE

By al-Hajj Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din

THE HISTORICITY OF FAITHS AND THEIR FOUNDERS

All religions are a matter of history. Even with Islam, the latest of all, more than thirteen hundred years have passed since its birth, and if a man must look to some Holy Scripture for the light he has to receive from a religion, no religion should claim our allegiance unless its record is absolutely unimpeachable on the score of authenticity. In this respect Islam seems to me to possess merits of its own — merits which attach to no other religion. For example, the Scriptures of all other religions have now been found, as is even admitted by their respective adherents, to be wanting in genuineness. Even Rabbis and high dignitaries of the Church are today ceasing to believe in the authenticity of the Holy Bible. The followers of Zoroastrianism can only point to five or six verses that have come to them in their original purity, out of all the revealed mass ascribed to that great prophet of Persia. Vedicism, popularly known as Hinduism, presents another insurmountable difficulty. The Holy Vedas were written in a language now obsolete and what we should call "dead"; no one in India speaks it or understands it. The Vedic verses are susceptible of contradictory interpretations; they have given rise to innumerable sects, who differ from each other even in the fundamentals of their religion while they all receive their inspiration from the same Book. There are atheists, theists, agnostics and deists, image-worshippers and image-breakers, among Hindus, but they all take the same Book as the authority to substantiate their respective views. The translation of the Vedas given by one class of Hindus is condemned by the others. On the other hand, al-Qur'án, the Holy Book of Islam, is admitted by friend and foe to be the very words revealed to Muhammad. The Book has maintained its purity till now. Fortunately we live in times when reliable criticism has established the above facts, and its verdict has not been questioned. Now whatever may be the worth of the teachings of a religion, I think I could not consider or accept its claims when the very source of our information with

respect to it is of a dubious character. From this point of view I think I am justified in saying that there is no comparison between Islam and other religions.

I was constrained to come to the same conclusion as to the founders of the various religious systems. The Vedic religion is the oldest of all; but we know nothing about the authors or recipients of Vedic revelations excepting their names, and these are but incidentally mentioned at the beginning of the different Vedic Mantras (hymns). Similarly, the strictly historical aspect of the Lord of Christianity is not free from doubt and suspicion. Even if Jesus may be admitted to be an historic character, we know very little of him. Mary, we read, gave birth to the illustrious Nazarene; but soon after the event she and her husband fled from Judaea with the child; and after some twelve years Jesus is seen in synagogues finding fault with the Rabbis and joining issue with the teachers of Judaism. Then the curtain drops again. Another gap of some eighteen years and the Master comes back out of an Essenic monastery and is seen on the banks of the River Jordan. But his ministry was too short for him to become our perfect specimen and guide in the manifold and divine walks of human life. A few sermons, a few miracles, a few prayers accompanied by a few curses are not enough to give humanity a religion. His movements are of meteoric character which presents few incidents of note and consequence, excepting his crucifixion. Moses was no doubt a great law-giver, an historic character, liberator of his nation from their bondage in Egypt, worker of wonders and performer of miracles, but not an example for practical purposes in real life. In a word, the life of all these founders is enshrouded in much mystery. My surprise knew no bounds when I began to read of Muhammad. Like a panorama the events of his life passed before my eyes one after the other. From the cradle to the grave everything of note in his life is narrated and preserved in a well-authenticated record. I was amazed to find in him an assemblage of the best of characteristics so rare in others. I am at a loss to understand how he could unite in himself all the best qualities of discrepant characters. He is meek and at the same time courageous; modest as a maiden but the bravest of the soldiers on a battlefield. While with children, loved for his playfulness and endearing talk to the little ones; when in the company of sages and old men, respected for his wisdom and farsightedness. Truthful, honest, trustworthy; a reliable friend, a loving father and husband, a dutiful son, and a helpful brother, Muhammad is the same man whether in adversity or prosperity; affluence or indigence cannot change him; unruffled in his temperament whether in peace or in war. Kind and hos-

pitable, liberal in giving but abstemious for himself. In short, judge Muhammad from whatever angle of human character you will, and he is nowhere found wanting.

With a critical eye, I studied all that has been said about him by his opponents. They could not lay a finger on a single flaw in his private character. It is perfect. And whatever has been said against his public character in one or two things, involves really a matter of principle. They say he had more than one wife ; that he waged war ; that he did this, that and the other ; but before we judge him in these matters we have to decide as to the validity of the principles under which he worked. If polygamy is a matter of necessity in certain circumstances and an economic measure sometimes, then why find fault with Muhammad, when all the great men and benefactors of humanity, especially in the world of religion, have all of them had more than one wife? As to the use of the sword, the whole world until now has taken the greatest pride in unsheathing the weapon. War has hitherto been an indispensable institution. A prophet was needed to teach the world the true ethics of war, and who can deny the nobility of Muhammad in this respect? He unsheathed the sword only to crush evil and defend truth. With great care I read the accounts of every war waged by him and they were all in self-defence.

There is something unique in this great man ; he is the only teacher among the noble race of prophets who brought his mission to success. Jesus was crushed by evil, and words of despair and despondency were on his lips on the Cross. Muhammad really crushed the serpent, but just in the moments of his victory, when the real "generation of vipers" was at his feet, his character revealed another noble aspect — that of forgiveness. No student of history can read the account of the conquest of Mecca by Muhammad without bowing down to that great hero. He not only forgives his cruel oppressors, but raises them to places of dignity and honour. Who knows what Jesus would have done if he had achieved any victory over his enemies? After all, he said that he had come not to send peace on the earth, but a sword. Moses, Ramchandra and Krishna, the other great teachers in the world of religion, disclosed not a gleam of mercy in their dealings with their enemies.

THE KALEIDOSCOPIC VIEW OF RELIGION

It did not take me long to pass in review the various religious persuasions with their tenets and doctrines. Whatever may have

been the original form of Hinduism, it is now one vast accretion of ceremonialism and sacrifice, this being the only feature common to its numberless sects; beyond this there is no meeting-ground among them. In fact, there does not exist a definition of Hinduism wide enough to comprise all its sections and sub-divisions. Animism, element-worship, hero-worship, polytheism in its worst shapes, monotheism, though not in its pure form — all come under the heading of Hinduism. It possesses its philosophy, but it is a philosophy which has no bearing whatever on practical life; it tries to solve certain riddles — for example the problem of ultimate pain and pleasure, and here it speaks of the transmigration of the soul — but all this is a species of mental luxury possessing no practical advantage. I admit that ceremonalism and sacrifices are not without their uses, but they are of secondary importance — a means to certain ends — whereas in Hinduism they have become essentials. Again, these Hindu rituals were intended to meet certain local and topical needs, and cannot therefore be of use to alien races and later generations.

Judaism brought light and culture into the world, but in the course of time it, too, became merged in ceremonialism and sacrifice. The vice of ceremonial piety lies in the fact that when once a person has observed its demands he thinks himself to be better than his neighbour, no matter what crime he may commit. For this very reason the Brahmins in Hinduism and the Pharisees in Judaism considered themselves absolved of all the duties laid upon other members of society. Jesus did not come with a new religion, nor did he found a Church; he was a Jew of the Jews. Jealous for the religion taught by Moses, he came to redeem the teachings of the Master from the formalism of the Pharisees. He had the courage to expose their hollowness and hypocrisy. In short, his aim was to reform Judaism and to restore it to its pristine purity, but his enemies would not allow him to do so, and so he failed in the end. Then St. Paul came on the scene, but instead of carrying on the work of Jesus, he grafted on the old faith something quite new and repugnant to it — the religion of the Blood and its grace.

It is called the "New Covenant", but it seems to me but a reappearance of old paganism with a change of name and setting. I sum up here the story of Christianity in a few words: Man drowned in sin and God alienated from him and in anger. To appease His wrath He sends His own son to the world through a virgin's womb. The son is brought to the Cross and pays the penalty for all human sin, thus washing away the sins of humanity with his blood. He dies for all, and then through his resurrection

brings new life to mankind. This is the superstructure of the Pauline schism as it was never taught by the Lord of Christianity. But it is not a new revelation. It has now come to light that Jesus as portrayed by Paul and others as "the new Adam" is only just the last of the virgin-born Sun-gods — Mithra, Apollo, Bacchus, Horus, Osiris and others; all of them born at the first hour of the 25th of December. They all led a peaceful mission; the first miracle that all performed had some connection with wine; they all declared that they had come to save humanity through their blood; they all went to death at the third hour of Friday some time in the end of March; they all remained in the tomb for two days; they all rose again on Easter Sunday; they all ascended into heaven with a promise to return.

Thus, centuries before the construction of the Christian Church, different countries had already evolved a system of religion which Christianity repeated word by word in the writings of the early Fathers. In the names of these virgin-born incarnates people were initiated into their cult through baptism. Their votaries worshipped the Cross, and their great festivals were Easter and Christmas. In fact, the Roman Catholic Church, the first church on Pauline lines after Jesus, is just a replica of the old cult of mystery; and Christian worship remains sun-worship with all its old features. How can we stigmatize Paganism as a false religion when all its features did but forestall the official Church in the West? If Paganism is falsehood, the formal Church must, *ipso facto,* be falsehood too. Anyhow, current Christianity is not a religion if by religion is meant a code of life that may help man to live worthily in this world and in the hereafter.

Viewed from this standpoint again, I say, Islam is my only choice. It is a religion of action, of good morals and ethics; a religion simple and practical; if I am asked to subscribe to its doctrines, I can do so freely: they are not dogmatic in their nature. All Islamic tenets are reasonable and consistent with intelligence. They have a direct bearing on life; and here I will go more into detail.

Doubtless Islam is not free from some sort of formalities. Muslims also make sacrifices, but my happiness knew no bounds when I read in the Qur'án:

> "It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteousness is this, that one should believe in God and the last day and the angels and the book and the prophets, and give away wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and

the wayfarer and the beggars and for (the emancipation of) the captives, and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate; and the performers of their promise when they make a promise, and the patient in distress and affliction and in time of conflict — these are they who are true (to themselves), and these are they who guard (against evil)."[1]

What a wonderful, decisive and bold statement! It brushes ceremonialism completely away. Islam has a few formalities but they seem to me to be essential formalities — one of them being the turning of the face, when in prayer, towards Mecca. It indicates the place that gave birth to Islam, and is hence a necessity; but the above verse says that doing so *in itself* is not a virtue unless thereby we are helped to observe certain beliefs and actions which are there set out. In fact, Muslims turn their faces to Mecca to remember and renew the inspiration they first received from that sacred place; and if turning our faces to Mecca is in itself of no value, then what of other ceremonial acts?

Muslims do observe sacrifice, but not to appease Divine wrath. One of the objects is to "Feed the poor man who is contented, and the beggar."[2] This institution also supplies an occasion for being benevolent to others, and it is a symbol of the religion of God; as the Qur'án says, we have to submit to His will as the animals under the knife have to submit to ours. And then a verse on the subject in the following thundering words denudes sacrifices of the merits that had been attached to them by other religions — such as the propitiation of Divine anger:

> "There does not reach God their flesh nor their blood, but to Him is acceptable the guarding (against evil) on your part; thus has He made them subservient to you, that you may magnify God because He has guided you aright; and give good news to those who do good (to others)."[3]

I know of no other formality in Islam; and if ceremonial piety is in itself of no consequence, then Hinduism and Judaism cannot satisfy human needs as a code of religion. Christianity no doubt did away with all the ritual that Jesus observed himself, because his personal sacrifice, as they say, atoned for it and absolved the believers in the blood from the ceremonial burden. But another set of rituals and formalities entered into the Church as a legacy from Paganism, and the position is worse than before. I cannot

1 The Qur'án, 2 : 177.
2 Ibid., 20 : 36.
3 Ibid., 22 : 37.

conclude these general remarks on religion and turn to the special doctrines of Islam before emphasizing one thing, though I have made reference to it in the foregoing: that is, the necessity for Qur'ánic Revelation at a time when the old Books of God had become hopelessly mixed with folk-lore. Every religion of the world has based its teachings on a Revelation from on high. It has pleased the Lord to guide humanity into the right path by revealing His Will to the world. The position is quite a tenable one, but if His Revelation sometimes suffers in purity and becomes vitiated, should He not send another Revelation to take the place of the old one? The Lord of the Universe observes the same course in all His dispensations. He creates things for our use, and when they disappear or become impaired or allayed there comes a fresh supply of such needful things. What is true in physical dispensations must be true also in the spiritual sphere. How can a believer shut his eyes to the necessity of a new Revelation if the old one has admittedly become corrupt? But none of all the Revelations given to the various nations of the world in olden days had remained in their original form — a fact now admitted by all — at that period of the Christian era, and a new Revelation, the Qur'án, was a necessity.

REVEALED BOOKS AND THEIR CONTENTS

Though all the peoples in the world were respectively given a book for their guidance from the Lord, they are all lost today with the exception of the Vedas, the Bible, and the Qur'án. The first two scriptures are of a kindred nature, but the third exhibits an absolutely different character. The Vedas and the Bible speak respectively of some particular nations, the so-called "chosen people" of God or gods; while the Qur'án is neither a narrative of a tribe nor a story of any individual. It concerns itself exclusively with man in general. Man and his God is its chief theme.

After speaking of the creation of the world and man, the chief interest of the Hebrew Scripture lies in one particular branch of the human race — the descendants of Abraham through Isaac. It speaks of the migration of the Israelites from the land of Abraham, their settlement in Egypt, their subsequent bondage under the Egyptian yoke, their liberation by Moses under God's command; then comes a mention of their religious and ceremonial code; again their wandering in the wilderness, their conquest of the promised land, and the establishment of the Hebrew governments, their grandeur and splendour; their subsequent iniquities and misdeeds; their stubbornness and vicious indulgences, and finally prophetic references by Jesus to their downfall. All these

facts are arrayed in the Book, one after the other, as it were, on an historical basis. The Bible also contains a narrative of the Hebrew Patriarchs, who impart religious teaching accompanied by comprehensive curses directed against their enemies. The Book also speaks of the visitations of God from time to time and the appearance of angels with good news. In short, the Bible is a complete story of the rise and fall of the Hebrews, with Moses at their head as the lawgiver and bringer of good tidings of the coming rise, and with Jesus, the last of the race, shedding tears of grief on the imminent fall.

Just as the Holy Bible concerns itself with the Hebrews, so the Vedas speaks of another race from Central Asia called Aryans, who crossed the River Indus and took up their abode in the western part of India. The Hindu Book speaks of the Aryan settlement in India as of an agricultural class, where they sang hymns in praise of the elements or other manifestations of nature which sent timely rains to fertilize their lands and bring them good crops. It speaks of their rituals and sacrifices, it refers to their fights with the aborigines of the country and the final victory of the former over the latter; their civic and martial life; the establishment of their governments and their other occupations; and in the end their self-indulgence and luxury, all painted in poetical strains. Thus the two books are more or less a history of the two tribes, with the mention of religion and its accessories as a matter of incident. Al-Qur'án, on the other hand, is purely a book of God's religion given to man. The elevation and progress of the human race or its degradation or downfall are the chief topics of the Arab Revelation. The Qur'án, doubtless, speaks of certain persons and certain nations, but such allusions are not the main object of the Book; they come in by way of illustration. For example, the Book lays down certain principles and doctrines for human edification; it warns man against the deeds that are sure to bring him to the lowest ebb; it reads him lessons of morality and of ethics; it speaks of spirituality and godliness; and it is in elucidation of these teachings that it makes reference to events in the lives of certain men — prophets and their enemies — and nations. It is for this reason that the Qur'án has not generally given full accounts of the people thus alluded to. It is not a collection of stories, but a book of economic, moral and spiritual instruction. The Bible and the Vedas may, perchance, give inspiration to the descendants of those for whom they were first revealed, but they cannot be of any great interest to mankind at large; while the Qur'án, on the other hand, is the book for all men of every time and clime, and cannot fail to command universal interest.

THE OBJECT OF REVELATION

Neither the Vedas nor the Bible seem to specify any object of Universal interest for their revelation. God no doubt spoke to Moses at Sinai and ordered him to go to Pharaoh with a message demanding freedom for the Israelites. After the Exodus, He again spoke to Moses and gave him the Ten Commandments ; and Moses when in need of guidance goes to his Lord from time to time and the Lord expresses His will for the guidance of His people. Similarly, whenever the chosen people are in difficulty or in trouble Jehovah sends His angels with words to meet the occasion. On the same lines we find various *Mantras* (hymns — in the Vedas, revealed to the old Hindu *Rishis*. The Ten Commandments undoubtedly promulgate the lines of action necessary to form a society. Sociable as we are, we must speak the truth ; we must respect the lives, property and womenfolk of our neighbours ; we must revere our parents, and, to give rest to our body, we must observe the Sabbath. I think any human society desirous of keeping itself in a healthy condition could have discovered these principles even without the help of any revelation. But the Qur'ánic Revelation is far above these primitive and temporal needs. It comes to raise man to the highest height to which he is able to soar. The first call that came to Muhammad in the cave at Hira is a call free from all personal or racial elements. It is a call for the uplifting of man in general. Muhammad was not called upon to serve his own nation, nor did the heavenly dove descend from above to choose the Son of God from among his fellow countrymen. Muhammad is inspired to raise his fellow-beings, wherever they may be, from the depth of degradation to the zenith of greatness. His first Revelation is as follows :

> " Read in the name of your Lord who created. He created man from a clot. Read and your Lord is Most Honourable, Who taught (to write), with the pen, taught man what he knew not. Nay ! man is most surely inordinate. Because he sees himself free from want."[1]

Man is ordered through Muhammad to read, to cultivate the art of writing, for the spread of books and enlightenment, and to discover sciences not known before, thereby bringing humanity to a position most honourable, because his Creator is Himself most honourable and His creation should index the greatness of the Maker. Matter reaches its physical consummation in the form of man, and Nature cannot improve upon it any further. But the same

1 The Qur'án, 96 : 1-7.

matter evolves a new thing in the human frame — human consciousness — the sum total of the passions, which when refined give rise to intellect, sentiment, sociability, morality, ethics, religion and spirituality. All these divine elements, intended to create a great civilization and to bring man to his real dignity, have been reposed in human nature. But as a flull-fledged man on the physical plane evolves from a clot of blood in the womb, so was human consciousness in clot condition at the appearance of Muhammad, who was deputed by God in the same verse to show his fellow beings the right path, as revealed to him by God, that will bring forth all that is noble and good in man.

This grand object the Holy Book takes for its revelation and makes mention of it in its very beginning.[1] When it defines the most exalted position which man is entitled to achieve, it also indicates the lowest degradation to which he may descend. In the story of Adam[2] the high and low conditions of man are defined. He is the vicegerent of God on earth. He is to receive homage from the angels of heaven and earth ; and for this purpose the sun and the moon, with all other manifestations of Nature, as the Qur'án says, have been made subservient to man.[3] All this he can achieve through knowledge, but if he is led astray from the right path he will be deprived of the means that contribute to his happiness.[4] With all our civilization we have not as yet attained the height which we have to achieve under the directions of the Last Book. We have not secured the position of being able to bring the sun and the moon into subjection. This is the goal which the Qur'án prescribes for us in our sojourn on the earth. In this connection the Qur'án further reveals to us that we possess the highest capabilities[5] but as we have arisen from an animal state and carry with us certain carnal cravings, the Book warns us that our way to the goal is beset with difficulties. We are liable to be degraded to the lowest of the low[6] and therefore we need guidance[7] to help us upwards in our evolutionary journey and to save us from falling into pitfalls. This is another purpose of Qur'ánic Revelation. We are in the dark[8] and we need a light, and the Book claims to be that light. Let St. Paul blackguard human nature ; Islam says that we possess an immaculate nature which is

1 The Qur'án, 2 : 5.
2 Ibid., 2 : sect. 4.
3 Ibid., 14. 32 : 33 ; 16 : 12.
4 Ibid., 2 : 36.
5 Ibid., 95 : 4.
6 Ibid., 95 : 5.
7 Ibid., 95 : 6.
8 Ibid., 14.

inherently free from the taint of sin. In this Islam differs from Christianity. If hell is the reward of sin and heaven is reserved for those who leave this earth sinless, Islam and Christianity advance two different and contradictory propositions. Christianity says that man is born in sin, while according to Islam he is sinless at his birth. If a child, therefore, dies at his very birth, he must go to heaven, under Islamic teaching, but he is foredoomed to hell according to Christian principles. In other words, heaven is our birthright under Islam. We may lose it by our subsequent misdeeds. But according to Christianity we are born for hell unless reclaimed by our faith in the Blood. Similarly, sin is a heritage according to Church beliefs, but is an after-acquisition under Islam, and can be avoided.

Thus the sole object of Christian Revelation is to bring man out of the slough of sin up to the brink of virtue, but Islam finds man already on its banks at his birth and comes to raise him to its highest flight that will bring him near the precincts of Divinity. What a world of difference is here! To resume the subject, there is another marked difference between the last and the ancient revelations. The Qur'án is rational in its teachings, while the Hindu and Hebrew Books are dogmatic in imparting their messages. Like a pedagogue or a father whose words are law or gospel to his pupils or children, the Bible and the Vedas assert their precepts and principles in a spirit that seems to expect no opposition or doubt from their respective recipients.

The Books speak of God, of angels, of resurrection, and the Last Day; of Divine messengership and accountability for present actions in the hereafter; but they make no attempt to substantiate these verities by any intelligent arguments. They claim nothing to meet the demand of a sceptical mind. Perhaps the human mind at the time of these revelations had not as yet crossed the frontiers of infancy, and was groping in the avenue of sentimentality. The Qur'án seems to belong to a time when the human mind had developed enough to give precedence to intellect over blind belief. For it also speaks of the above-mentioned truths, but with logic and reason. To bring home its doctrines to its reader's mind, it makes frequent appeal to our understanding and rational judgment. It draws our attention to various manifestations of nature as evidence of what it enunciates. For instance, there are logical reasons and rational arguments in the Book to prove the existence of God, of the day of resurrection, the necessity of Divine revelation, and many other things. The Muslim Scripture would not ask its readers to accept any of its teachings — except on the strength of reasoning. This is perhaps why Islam has not observed any atheistic or

sceptical movement or disposition in its ranks ; while no sooner did the Church persecution become relaxed and intellect freed from its iron grip than secularizing and free thought flourished apace.

In India there has perhaps been no such marked struggle between religion and agnosticism, for the Vedas favoured atheistic and sceptical tendencies equally with other forms of Hindu schism. And here, again, Islam and the other two religions present a most striking contrast. Education has alienated the human mind from the Church religion. It has brought forth a similar revolt against Hinduism, especially in these latter days. But modern science has only served to strengthen Muslim belief in the Qur'ánic truths. We are rational beings. Reason and logic play a prominent part in all our beliefs and persuasions. No other book but the Qur'án, therefore, will meet the demand of our time.

Again, the first two revelations do not specifically speak of the articles of their faith ; each inquirer must gather them for himself from these Books. In the Christian Churches the task fell to the Church Councils. The articles of the Christian faith as promulgated by the Fathers were collected in the Book of Common Prayer, and have been the object of successive revisions from time to time.

In Hinduism, want of a definite statement in the Vedas as to what were the articles of faith in the Vedic religion gave rise to innumerable sects that differ from each other even in their fundamental tenets. From such a fate the Qur'án has saved the Muslims ; for it has clearly laid down in various verses the Islamic articles of faith.[1]

ARTICLES OF FAITH IN ISLAM

Iman, the word which in Arabic corresponds to "faith", means knowledge of a thing coupled with a conviction as to its truth so strong as to incite us to strive our utmost to live up to it. The word does not, in Qur'ánic terminology, include beliefs which cannot be translated into action, or are not concerned with action. Consequently, belief in something accepted as verity on the basis of a dogma does not come within the category of religious beliefs in Islam. In fact, dogmatic doctrines have no significance for a Muslim. Faith, however, in the Qur'ánc sense of the word, plays a most important part in moulding every human word or action. All our movements are the portraits of such of our concepts as are based upon sure and certain faith. Every item of our routine,

1 The Qur'án, 2 : 285.

however insignificant, is but a motion picture of our belief in the existence or the non-existence of things. Any change in such a belief straightway produces a change in the routine. Even a slight movement of our lips, or of any other portion of the body, springs from some belief or other. For instance, we cannot utter a word unless we believe as well in the audibility and articulation of the sound we make as in the ability of our hearer to hear and give to our words the same meanings which they convey to us. Similar belief is always present in our mind concerning everything that emanates from us. This emphasizes the importance of a vigilant and wise choice of faith in every avenue of our existence, since soundness of action follows soundness of belief; and more especially is this so in our religious beliefs, seeing that no other belief approaches them in strength and in influence on the ordering of our life.

Every religion lays down certain articles of faith as its basic principles, demanding from its adherents an implicit faith therein. These basic principles may or may not appeal to our intelligence, or serve any useful purpose for us in this life, but it is nevertheless claimed for them that they possess unique merits in securing salvation and happiness in the life beyond the grave for those who hold them.

As to that life, almost every religion strikes the same note. Faith in tenets diametrically opposed to each other in teaching have by different religions been invested with similar merits that are to accrue to the believer in his life after death. If a faith in the divinity of A and B, for instance, brings salvation to the believer according to one religion, it dooms him to everlasting punishment in the life to come, according to the other. No religion, on the other hand, has any decisively logical support for its assertions. No one as yet has returned from behind the veil to bear witness to the truth of his faith. Even "seance-phenomena", apart from all considerations of their futility or otherwise, are not reliable evidence that such a thing has occurred. The French spiritualist, for example, accepts the transmigration of the soul as a truth on the strength of phenomenal testimony, while his colleague in England will disbelieve in the doctrine on evidence precisely similar. Under these circumstances I am forced to conclude that a religion's claim for belief in its doctrines should never be heeded, unless those doctrines satisfy our intelligence and have been tested in the crucible of utility as regards our present life.

A plunge in the dark is a dangerous proceeding, but it is infinitely more dangerous to believe in things that not only have no bearing on our present life but sometimes are actually harmful in their effects on the building of our character. By way of illustra-

tion I may refer to doctrines like the Atonement, Predestination, Fatalism and the Transmigration of the Soul. No one can prove any of these by reference to anything in this present life. They may seem plausible to some, but belief in them mainly concerns things as to which we are utterly in the dark. On the other hand, they produce no wholesome effects on this life, nor do they leave any incentive for action. In fact, when taken literally they prompt no action at all.

Fear of punishment is, in most cases, the only deterring influence in crushing evil. The pressure of public opinion and legal penalties are the great discouragers of wrong, and wherever they relax their hold, evil begins to crop up. Thus, for example, prostitution, gambling and drinking have been the curse of Christian nations, chiefly for the above reasons. Public opinion in Christian lands is not strong enough to stop these evils, while legislation, on its criminal side, is nearly silent on the subject. The fear of punishment in the life to come acts as a deterrent in this respect in non-Christian races; but this can hardly be so with believers in the Atonement. If God could not find any other remedy for the cleansing of human sin than that of sending His own sons from time to time to pay its penalty — since Jesus was only the last of the Pagan Christs who came to give their lives for human salvation — then there is no need of any good action on our part. There are very few of us who pursue virtue for its own sake. It is the reward of virtue, especially seen in its efficacy in counterbalancing the effects of sin, that we fulfil the law and lead a good life. But if the same thing is attainable merely by our belief in the Grace of Blood, few would think it worthwhile to bear the hardships and trials of the life of righteousness. Belief in the Atonement obviates the necessity for action. So it was held by Luther. Though the Romish Church attaches importance to good actions also, yet logically Luther is in the right in his conclusions. Similarly, our belief in Predestination — another Christian verity — Fatalism and the Transmigration of the Soul, weakens such impulses as we may have toward action. If everything in the form of pain and pleasure in this life has already been chalked out for us in the past, as the principle of the Transmigration of the Soul teaches, and no effort on our part can alter what is to be, then no moral schemes for avoiding adversity or achieving happiness are of the slightest avail. Similarly, if evil follows a man as the shadow of his actions in a past life, he need not strive to free himself from its hold, since it is unavoidable. If, for example, he is suffering from fever in consequence of some wrongdoing in his past incarnation under the law of "Karma", no medical skill can cure him. Nay, it obviates any

necessity for medical attention and, I may say, for the profession itself. It would put a stop to all advancement in that branch of science, and the same can be presumed in regard to other departments of human activity. I admit that believers in these principles do not generally show apathy towards progress. They are interested in it and sometimes contribute to its advancement, but this only means that they do not faithfully believe in things they hold as articles of faith. Their actions belie their belief.

A word here on the subject of the existence of God will not be out of place. Belief in the Deity has been universally the *sine qua non* of religion from time immemorial. The worshipping instinct in man has always found its gratification in directing his devotional feelings to some kind of deity. Buddhism is an exception to this rule, since no mention of God is contained in its Scriptures. But the passion for worshipping established its supremacy there very speedily. All that is reserved for God in other religions goes to Buddha. All Buddhistic countries teem with his images. Their temple is another house of worship for idols, where the worshippers are seen sitting or standing before the images of Lord Buddha, with the same postures and gesticulations as are adopted elsewhere by the worshippers of God. Buddha is addressed in the same terms and receives the same adoration and homage as are ascribed by other religions to God. In short, this passion for devotion to some supreme Being is the dominant feature of man's mind. From a stone to a son of woman, he has adored various manifestations of nature as his God, and he has been none the worse for it — seeing that he has been able to keep a certain moral order under any system of worship. The worship of idols has at times inspired him with noble and lofty feelings, like those which have been observed in the most worthy of the worshippers of God. Prayers addressed to images made by man's own hands have in their beauty, grandeur and sincerity surpassed even the devotional utterances of the holiest of monotheists while adoring the Most High. The Vishnuvites, for example — a class of Hindu idol worshippers in India — are often strict observers of morality. Their piety sometimes surpasses the righteousness of a virtuous Unitarian.

The tenets of Islam, however, supported by Culture and Progress, have played havoc with old beliefs, and the futility of such old beliefs has at last become exposed. They have lost all the force they once possessed for the moulding of good character. The world at large is on the high road to belief in Unity, and even those who, like the Christians, still evince some sort of polytheistic tendencies, are now almost prepared to apologize for them. Belief in the unity of God in its purest form, when rendered into action

in our daily life, would — as I will describe later on — merely, without doubt, bring our civilization to its climax; but a lip belief in the Oneness of God is, in my humble opinion, less meritorious than the different forms which polytheism has adopted in the cases above mentioned. Orthodoxy may take strong exception to my statement, but I would make bold to say that a polytheist who leads a virtuous life earns more merit in the eye of the Lord than a wicked person with all his belief in the unity of God. I also say that I see no excellence in such a belief if it exerts no influence in beautifying the character. It is useless to sing hymns at the top of our voices if we are not leading, and do not lead, godly lives. God does not stand in need of any adoration from us; and if He does, He is not worthy of the great names with which He is revered. I would go further than that; I would say that if our worship of Him lies only in bringing offerings and sacrifices to His altar, and in the recital of praises and thanks to Him, it is neither creditable to God nor profitable to man. He is only another fetish and the biggest in the world of religion. God should stand above these things. He needs no praise from us. The Qur'án is very explicit on the point. It says that our extolling or praising God does not contribute to His glory, nor does blasphemy retract at all from His grandeur and dignity. Our prayers to Him should consist of such expressions, whether praise or thanksgiving to God or supplications to Him for some favour, as may set us to work out our own power and ability to our best advantage.

In this respect my choice falls on the prayer that Islam prescribes for a Muslim. It is the opening chapter of the Qur'án. It begins with words of praise and thanksgiving, but if both these actions do not go beyond the lips of the worshipper they are of no avail in Islam. The opening words of the Muslim prayer[1] are *al-Hamdu li 'l-Lahi Rabbi 'l-'Alamin,* meaning "All praises and thanksgiving are for God". The word "Hamd" in Arabic is very rich in meaning. It conveys four ideas.

First, the word has an exclusive use. It is reserved for the praise of the Lord. Secondly, it conveys the idea of perfection; the worshipper sees in God all the best and most excellent attributes. Thirdly, it expresses a longing desire on the part of the worshipper to possess all such attributes to the extent of his abilities, and hence his prayers for them. Fourthly, it means thanks, that is, for his

1 "(All) Praise is due to God, the Lord of the Worlds. The Beneficent, the Merciful, Master of the day of requital. Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help. Guide us on the right path, the path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours, not those upon whom wrath is brought down, nor those who go astray" (The Qur'án, 1 : 1-7).

possession of capacity for cultivating such attributes in himself. In fact, the action of praise psychologically consists of the said four ingredients. Perfection in beauty, sublimity and goodness on the one side, and our lack of them with desire to own them on the other, move our admiration and praise for the owner of those excellencies ; but we never desire to possess a thing unless we own the ability to do so, and hence our gratitude for it. Thus the word " Hamd " on the lips of a Muslim while at prayer is no empty word of compliment that may please the ears of the Deity, but a genuine expression of a genuine desire to mould his life on Divine lines ; and to this end the Muslims recite, after the word " Hamd ", four names of God which are the most beautiful among their class. They are *Rabb, Rahman, Rahim* and *Malik-i-yaum al-Din.* Each of them, if followed by us, would make a millennium for the world. *Rabb* means Creator, Nourisher, Maintainer and Bringer of faculties to perfection. *Rahman* means All-Beneficent Lord whose blessings go to all, unmerited and undeserved, and not by way of compensation for any good action but of His own goodness. *Rahim* means One who rewards an action manifold. *Malik* means the owner of the kind of judgment, whose sentence of punishment is only for reclamation and is not the fruit of anger on account of man's disobedience. The beauty of these four attributes is that in them God does not observe any distinction of class and creed among men. The God of Islam is the God of all nations, who is impartial in the dispensation of His blessings. I wish the rulers of the earth who hold sway over other races could show so broad-minded and liberal an attitude, for then the burden of foreign rule would lose its curse. A Muslim says his prayers five times a day, which reminds him of these four Divine moulds in which he has to cast his daily life. High morality in Islam consists in the reflection of Divine morals — a truth that has recently dawned on the minds of Western theologians.

Next, the worshipper speaks of his service to God, and the best religious service. According to Islam, this consists of doing actions in conformity with the requirements of the Divine Names. The Prayer then speaks of things for which a Muslim has to pray to his God. He must not pray for earthly good, but for knowledge — knowledge of the right path that may bring him under the grace and blessings of God, and keep him away from wickedness and error.

I have made a somewhat wide digression from my subject, but it was not without its relevancy when dealing with the worshipping side of our nature. I have said that if the worship of a deity produces no moral effect on our life, it need not be pursued.

Similarly, if adoring one deity is equal in its results to the worshipping of another, the choice among them is immaterial. By way of illustration I would take man-worship from among the various forms of polytheism as being the last and most refined. Jesus is the last of those favoured persons who from time to time have been placed on the throne of God by their fellowmen. And here I would mention two other persons who besides Jesus still command human allegiance as God. These are Krishna and Rama-Chandar — the two Indian deities — who were adored as such a thousand years before the birth of Christianity. Like Jesus, they are Eastern and come of coloured races, but as gods, they are superior to him in many respects. They are more historic than the Nazarene. They can claim more genuineness for their life-records, though these were not free from folk-lore. Their precepts and other utterances are, in general, more majestic, more awe-inspiring, and of greater practical utility than visionary sermons from the Mount. Jesus came of humble parentage and did not possess even a roof for shelter, but if Rama-Chandar were a prince and later on a ruler, Krishna ruled the destinies of kings in his time. Jesus had nothing to sacrifice, as far as worldly possessions go, but the Indian gods gave up the best of worldly things in the service of humanity. Jesus was crushed by evil, but Rama-Chandar crushed evil, and Rudhra — another name for Krishna — had been the crusher of evil throughout his life. The actions ascribed to these great men by their narrators are transcendent. They are like shadows of the powers of the Almighty while the Bible is silent in the case of the sacred Carpenter in this respect. Undoubtedly the worshippers of these Indian gods did not exhibit a high standard of morals at certain periods of their history, but it is only fair to point out that such periods corresponded with that period in the history of the world — I compare the Middle Ages in Europe — when every corner of it presented a horizon of moral darkness. Christianity was no exception, but in many ways worse. However, I look at the subject from a different angle. If we have to seek our God in the incarnate form, I see no special reason for giving precedence to Jesus over others. Our belief in him has not helped mankind any more than the Hindu belief in Krishna and Rama-Chandar. In one respect, Christianity has been woefully at fault. In the matter of culture and civilization Christianity has proved an implacable enemy to human advancement. It crushed science as long as it had the power to do so, and would do the same today if the modern world would suffer it. Only the other day[1] the Bishop

1 This essay was written in 1931.

of Ripon proposed to give scientific research a holiday for ten years. This was but an echo of the old cry of tyranny and oppression that came from the Church against culture and science in the Middle Ages, though it is clothed in the euphemisms of modern refinement.

In short, if belief in the divinity of a man has not helped the human race more than belief in the divinity of stones or elements in the days of ignorance, it is as I have shown before, not worthy of our further attention. Modern progress in the West should not be taken as the fruit of man's faith in the Church dogmas. The West made no progress so long as it was in the iron grip of Christianity.

But even our belief in the Supreme Being, or the worship of God, is of no consequence if it does not help in the betterment of our race. Religion has been regarded as a necessary human institution from the days of Adam and Eve. But it should be treated as a back number if our pursuit of it possesses no utility. The whole question depends on the article of faith upon which a religion insists. If it asks us to believe in such tenets as have come under discussion in these pages, I think we are none the worse for dispensing with it. But if it invites our faith in doctrines that bring out all that is noble and good in us, and urges us to use all the powers of nature, whether reposed in the human frame or in the rest of the universe, to our best advantage, then religion becomes a most essential human institution. I repeat, God is not in need of human worship, but if our worship of Him inspires us to follow His way as they are to be observed in the universe, ways that work out the best of civilization on righteous lines, it ought to be part and parcel of our life. I would go to my God fifty times a day in such prayerful mood, though Islam prescribes but five prayers only.

The greatest blessing that has come to us from science is our belief in the existence of Law and that only our submission to it can bring us to success and happiness. Law is the order of the time. Every atom of nature and its various combinations, including the human frame, owes its very existence and further development to implicit obedience to Law. From the nebulous stage, up to the human frame, everything is a slave to Law. Religion will be doing the greatest possible service to humanity if it inspires man with a strong belief in Law. Virtue and evil, both in their growth and origin, are commensurate with the strength or weakness of our belief in Law and its forces. Criminality comes to the surface in quarters where Law can be avoided without fear of detection, and it becomes absolutely non-existent if we believe in the inexorableness of its punishments.

If Law is all in all in this way, and our belief in it is the greatest factor in the building of our character and in the achievement of success, it needs our strong belief not only in its Maker, who invests it with full force in its operation, but in many other things connected with Law. Law demands as well the services of its "functionaries", who must keep it always in force, since without them it would be but a dead-letter.

Again, Law, or such portion of it as rules human destinies, whether discovered or revealed, should be preserved in such a form as may be of service to all units of humanity. It has not fallen to the lot of all men to make researches in the realms of Law, nor to be inspired by the contemplation of its source. There are but a few chosen persons of the human race who are favoured with this gift, and it is their duty to guide and enlighten their fellow men. Again, Law loses all its force, nor can it compel universal adhesion, unless and until some reward or punishment comes inevitably to its fulfiller or breaker. Lastly, there ought to be set times for such reward and punishment — when the fruits of submission or disobedience to Law should become manifest to all. Thus if Law is the lever of the whole machinery in the universe, and our belief in it works wonders for our progress, we should also, to make it a reality in our eyes, believe in the Maker of the Law, its functionaries, its record, and the custodians thereof. We must believe, too, in the reward and the punishment ordained by such an administrative system.

For illustration, take any human institution that contributes to our civilization and we shall find it revolving on the pivot of the above-mentioned seven principles, with Law as one of them. Take the government of any country. No society, even in its most primitive state, can work on healthy lines without some sort of government acting in it as a sovereign political authority. It works through its laws. It must have machinery to set them in motion. It must reduce its laws to a record — they may be laws unwritten but imprinted on the tablet of the human mind — and entrust them to intermediate officials to convey to the general public. The government also needs a court of law to administrate, etc. If the Law is a thing so important, and I may say the only key to our advancement and perfection, it should be the first duty of religion to inspire in us a strong stimulus for respecting it. I find myself unable to attach any value to a faith which lacks such incentive. I cannot imagine any greater harm to the very fabric of human society than that which accrues to us by reason of our belief in a doctrine that either weakens our sense of responsibility or enervates our energy and divests us of motive for action. A religion that belittles

the importance of Law is best forgotten. For this reason I had to give up my belief in the Atonement and other similar doctrines. I could not see, as I remarked before, any necessity for believing even in God, if belief is not attended with the results I have just mentioned. Law and its rules are the main things in the whole universe. Law demands an unswerving belief in its existence and implicit obedience. It is inexorable in awarding its penalties to its disbelievers and breakers. No other belief can save the transgressor of the Law from its demands in this life ; and shall not the same apply to the hereafter? Should not religion, then, inculcate first of all the necessity and importance of our faith in Law? It must speak of other verities also, because belief in the Law, and that alone, is of no avail, if unaccompanied by belief in other essential things. Divine worship may be taken as a matter of first importance in religion, but we know nothing of God except through His ways of work in nature. Hence our worship of Him should find its real manifestation in our following His ways in our life. Our prayer or other form of adoration should act as a reminder of that Great Truth.

The recital of certain sacred words is not an act of worship ; true worship consists in submission to His laws. In this respect I can safely say that Islam is the only representative of religion from Above. The word itself literally means submission to laws, and a Muslim is one who obeys the Law. Law of course means the Divine Laws, whether discovered by us as laws of nature or revealed to man by God Himself. The Qur'án uses several other words as synonyms of Law — ways of God. His limits and His bounds, His government, His pre-measurement of good and evil, and the Throne He sits upon, etc. These words, in fact, convey different functions and aspects of Law. It comes to prescribe limits ; for, since no action in itself is either good or bad, it is its use or application, and the circumstances under which it is used or applied, that makes it good or bad. The Law thus defines the limits under which an action brings good to its doer or doers ; and in this respect it becomes a virtue. Any transgression from the prescribed bounds means wrong, wickedness, and sin.

I cannot cite a stronger statement on behalf of a revealed religion and its necessity than which I found in the last section of

the second chapter of the Qur'án.[1] First it speaks in clear terms of six things written in bold letters on every page of nature, and their existence is palpable even to a most superficial observer, since the denial of it is attended by immediate unrelenting penalty. These are the things in reality that can rightly be given the name of Truth or Verity. The so-called verities adopted as such by various persuasions are more dogmatic.

The verities spoken of in these verses are as follows :

1. The universality of Divine Government — the working of His Law in Heaven and in the Earth.

2. Our unavoidable accountability to God for our every action hidden or manifest.

3. His law of retribution ever in operation, with occasional remission under given conditions.

4. Our ability to submit to His Laws.

5. Laws of action and their results, i.e., we reap what we sow.

6. The Hereafter — the time to bear the fruits of our actions. It may be immediate, since sometimes we are punished immediately for our wrongs, or it may be in the future — what is popularly styled the Last Day or the Day of Judgment in religious parlance.

No special revelation from God, no elaborate teaching of tutor divine is needed to bring home to us these truths. Everything in nature speaks of them. No one with a grain of wisdom in his head can deny them ; which being so, the case for religion and its necessity, as well as the nature of its tenets, is obvious enough.

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1 " Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is God's ; and whether you manifest what is in your minds or hide it, God will call you to account according to it ; then He will forgive whom He pleases and chastise whom He pleases, and God has power over all things. The Messenger (Muhammad) believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers ; they all believe in God and His angels and His books and His apostles : We make no difference between any of His messengers ; and they say : We hear and obey, our Lord ! Thy forgiveness (do we crave), and to Thee is the eventual course. God does not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability ; for it is (the benefit of) what it has earned, and upon it (the evil of) what it has wrought : Our Lord ! do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake ; our Lord ! do not lay on us a burden as Thou didst lay on those before us ; our Lord ! do not impose upon us that which we have not the strength to bear ; and pardon us and grant us protection and have mercy on us, Thou art our Patron, so help us against the unbelieving people " (The Qur'án, 2 : 284-6).

Even an atheist must bow down to these six laws. In fact, they are his creed if we eliminate the words "God" or "His" from the above. He accepts the yoke of Law quite meekly. His only trouble is his inability to believe in the Mind from which Law emanates — a thing of easy proof in the light of modern scientific researches. Even those who take exception to some of the above-mentioned verities, for example the fourth — our ability to obey the law — are compelled to believe in the working of these six laws on the physical plane. Everything in the universe contradicts their dogma.

In this connection I would make a few remarks concerning the fundamental doctrine of Christianity — the doctrine of so-called Original Sin. If sin means our violation of Law, the doctrine falls to the ground. Admittedly we are capable of doing wrong, we violate Law, but this propensity in our nature does not deny our ability to observe it. The whole machinery of a government in human society works on the assumption that the members of such society are capable of obeying the mandates of the government. Without such assumption or belief, the very existence of working of a body like the British Parliament — and in the same category come various other legislative bodies — becomes an anomaly.

We believe in the working of the above-quoted six laws in the tangible world, but some of us do not see our way to concede the same belief to them in the life beyond the grave. I need not here repeat what I said before to prove the futility of such a position. Suffice it is to observe that I have keenly studied the laws or commandments of God as given in the Bible, and there is not a single word in them that cannot be fulfilled by man. Some there may be who evince a certain laxity in observing some of the said commandments, but the human race is not lacking in those who are or have been true Muslims — obedient to those laws. The first four commandments, as given in Exodus, demand our staunch belief in the unity of God. The rest of the commandments have been observed by a larger portion of humanity, as without their enforcement no human society, even in its most primitive steps of development, can stand, even for a short time. A Moses is needed to enforce those commandments in a newly fledged society for its healthy development.

But to return. The said six laws compel our belief. If we wish to live as good citizens under the government of the Lord, and attain true success and happiness, we must look for those laws and sit at the feet of those who are their custodians and teachers. It is in this respect that the quoted verses of the Qur'án speak of the prophets and the Books they bring from God. The Books come to reveal the Will of the Lord of His ways under which He rules all

things in heaven and earth. There is one thing more which is so necessary to infuse in us a spirit strong enough to inspire an implicit obedience to Law, and that is our belief in its unfailing and unavoidable working together, with its inexorability in the exaction of its penalties. In this connection from on High that belong to the various religious persuasions speak of certain sentient beings called Angels. According to Qur'ánic teachings they are a body that bring Law and every force in nature into operation and keep them so. This is their function and the object of their existence. They act as a life or soul in everything in the universe. They set the faculties of nature in motion. I do not propose to enter into a long discussion of the subject, but merely to emphasize the fact that if we do need a strong belief in Law and our obedience to it, we can never achieve it unless we believe in the existence of beings like angels. It was in this light that I have named them in these pages the "functionaries" of Law.

We may or may not believe in any religious system, but we must and do believe in these verities. They are part and parcel of our health and happiness; and they ought to be the articles of faith in any religion which claims to have come from God. They are as follows:

1. Law.
2. God, as the source of Law.
3. Angels — functionaries of Law.
4. The Books — the record of Law.
5. The Prophets — the intermediate persons who receive first message from the Lord on the subject.
6. The Hereafter.
7. The Day of Judgment.

These are the seven verities spoken of in the Qur'ánic verses which demand our belief, a belief which is given to them by every person in his mundane affairs.

The present is the mother of the future. The after-life is the child of the present life. The former evolves out of the latter. Matter, in its evolutionary course on the physical plane, receives its final perfection in the human frame, but it gives rise to another order — the order of morality, ethics and spirituality. Life with the progressive element in it leaves the body at our death like the aroma from fruit or a flower. It is like a vapour, but it possesses vast potentialities for creating a great cloud full of healthy rain. But Law, as I said before, rules every step of progress in the course of evolution. It is in obedience to it that success or full

development attends the progressive element in its journey. We therefore need a System of Law that may help us to work out our future life on desirable lines so that we may secure a full measure of bliss in higher regions.

And the code of it must and can only come from the original Intelligence, source of all life and its progress; hence the necessity for a Revealed Religion to disclose the above-mentioned verities, with full details for working them out. Any other system of religion is but a nursery-tale, whose function it is to feed credulity and gratify the "child" in man. But the child matures one day in intelligence and judgment and begins to see things in the light of reason and culture. It is on this account that religions based on dogma and superstitions are becoming exiled from the lands of culture and advancement.

Before concluding these lines I should like to say a word on the Law of Remission as promulgated in the above-mentioned verses from the Qur'án. It is based on Equity and Justice, and satisfies every demand for reason. The sacred Book, after mentioning our ability[1] to abide by Law and then referring to our accountability for our actions,[2] speaks of such mitigating circumstances as may avail to remit the penalty[3] of Law for its breach. They are three in number:

1. Forgetfulness of Law, as in the case of Adam, according to the Qur'ánic version.
2. Unintentional omission.
3. Inability under particular circumstances to meet the demands of Law.

No one can take exception to the logic and rationality of the provisions. They bring Divine forgiveness for our wrongs, but we must approach the Master of the Judgment for it in prayerful humility. The Qur'án for this reason has formulated the said three provisions in the form of a prayer.

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1 "God does not impose upon any soul a duty, but to the extent of its ability."—Muhammad Ali's Translation of the Qur'án, 2 : 286.

2 "For it (soul) is (the benefit of) what it has earned, and upon it (the evil of) what it has wrought."—Ibid.

3 "Our Lord! do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake; our Lord! do not lay on us a burden as Thou didst lay on those before us."—Ibid.

Deputy Inspector-General Charles William Buchanan Hamilton, Royal Navy (Southsea)

"I have read the article 'Islam my Only Choice' and have decided to join your faith."

General Buchanan Hamilton came of a well-known Irish family, being the son of Canon John Hamilton of Tuam, County Galway. Cousin to the first Duke of Abercorn, and a nephew of James Buchanan, who was at one time American Ambassador in London.

The General served through the Egyptian War of 1882 on the "Beacon", and among other actions was present at the seizure of the Suez Canal and the occupation of Port Said. For his distinguished services he won the Egyptian Medal Alexandria clasp, and the Khedive's Bronze Star.

He was also holder of the Suakim Clasp and India Medal, Burma 1885 and clasp.

He was a regular reader of *The Islamic Review* and wrote the following after reading this article when first published in the *Review*, only a fortnight before he breathed his last on 15th July 1929 (may his soul rest in peace): "I have read the article 'Islam My Only Choice' and have decided to join your faith."

What is Islam?

The following are some of the highlights of the religion of Islam:

One God: One Humanity

Islam looks upon the whole of humanity as one family under the universal benevolence of God — the common Creator and Nourisher of all.

Universality of Divine Light

Islam teaches that just as the life and light-giving rays of God's sun shine upon all alike, the light of revelation, equally indispensable for man's spiritual growth and well-being, was vouchsafed to all the nations of the world in all ages.

Belief in all World Teachers

As a corollary to the above, Islam enjoins faith in all the Founders of the revealed religions of the world, as much as in the Prophet Muhammad.

Jesus Venerated as a Divine Teacher

The Qur'án (the Scripture of Islam) speaks of Jesus in the highest terms, describing him as one of God's chosen Prophets, making it obligatory on a Muslim to venerate him as such. It refutes the doctrines of sonship, resurrection and atonement as later inventions never taught by Jesus.

No Chosen People

Islam rejects the idea of a chosen people, making faith in God and good actions the sole key to Heaven.

No Priestcraft

Islam is the common man's religion, making direct personal access to God open to all alike, without the mediation of a priest.

No Fatalism

Islam makes man the architect of his own destiny. Created with the highest of potentialities, man is left a free master to make or mar his own future through a life of honest endeavour or otherwise.

Universal Human Rights

Islam teaches the sanctity of human personality, confers equal rights upon all, makes freedom of conscience and expression man's most sacrosanct birthright which must on no account be violated, and subjects the highest and the humblest, the prince and the peasant, the king and the commoner, equally to the sovereignty of the law.

Equality of the Sexes

Islam puts man and woman on a footing of equality, throwing open to both alike all opportunities for self-advancement—spiritually, intellectually, morally, socially and economically.

Tolerance of Differences

Islam gives every individual the right to differ with others, and teaches toleration of, even respect for, honest differences of opinion or religious views.

A Democratic Way of Life

Islam stands for a democratic way of life, making popular will and public opinion the corner-stone of both the State and social progress, abhorring indoctrination or regimentation in any shape or form.

A Dynamic Progressive System

There is no rigidity in the Islamic system. It looks upon change and progress as the very breath of life — static-ness and stagnation being its very negation.

FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

Declaration of Faith

The very first thing essential to put one on the road to the Islamic way of life is the public declaration of the following, which constitutes the first article of Faith:

"I bear witness that there is no god but One God, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger."

Prayer

A Muslim is required to say his prayers (Salaat) five times a day — early dawn, early afternoon, late afternoon, sunset and late evening.

Fasting

A Muslim has to observe the whole of the lunar month of Ramadhan as a month of fasting, abstaining from eating, drinking and smoking between the hours of early dawn and sunset.

Zakat

A Muslim has to give away annually $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of his wealth as charity to be spent on the poorer sections of the community.

Pilgrimage

A Muslim must perform once in his lifetime a pilgrimage to the Ka'ba in Mecca, provided he has the means to do so.

No Ritualism

All these various observances are intended to foster a sense of the Divine majesty, self-discipline, fellow-feeling and a sense of the universal fellowship of man, irrespective of caste, colour, language or station in life. Shorn of this inner content, warns the Qur'án, they carry no value with God.

He is Allah
There is but one God: Muhammad is the Messenger of God

DECLARATION FORM

(SPECIMEN)

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

I (Mr./Mrs./Miss) .....

of .....

.....

do hereby faithfully and solemnly declare of my own free will that I worship God and God alone; that I believe Muhammad to be His Messenger and Servant; that I respect equally all Prophets — Abraham, Moses, Jesus, etc., and that I will live a Muslim life by the help of Allah.

Ashhadu an la Ilaha illa 'l-Lah wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan 'Abdu-hu wa Rasuluhu

(I bear witness that there is but One God and I bear witness that Muhammad is His Servant and His Messenger)

Dated.....

(Signature) .....

QUESTIONNAIRE

(SPECIMEN)

(Entries below are to be filled in by the intending member of the Islamic Brotherhood)

Surname .....

Christian Name .....

Date and Place of Birth .....

Present Address .....

Career .....

Occupation .....

Previous Religion .....

The particular church or denomination

of former religion .....

The reasons for the change of faith .....
(Use separate sheet of paper if necessary)

Any Islamic literature which you may have read .....

.....

Any Islamic organization which you may have come in contact with .....

Signature .....

Date .....

All changes of address should be reported to us for facilities of fraternal communication.—*The Imam.*

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